

VICTORIAN  
NARRATIVE VERSE

CHARLES WILLIAMS



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## PREFACE

ONE of the most interesting things about the Victorian age, which is at last taking on the full aspect of the past, is the honour paid to, and the terms used of, George Elliot. A novelist, ranking certainly very high among the writers of the period, was ranked by them with the greatest names of antiquity, with Sophocles, with Homer, with Dante. So general an agreement argues that all found in her something they recognized and admired. Is it to epigrammatize too recklessly to call that quality nobility?

All genius, at the moments of its full exercise, becomes symbolical not so much of the age in which it is produced as of the universal life of man. It is not therefore in the greater but in the lesser writings of the Victorians that their characteristics are most clearly seen, in *Romola* rather than in *Adam Bede*. It is still more in the casual phrases of a hundred novels, of minor verse and almost unnecessary essays, that the spirit of the period is to be most clearly discerned. Between the two romantic ages which preceded and followed it the Victorian seems to aim, like the thirteenth century and the Augustan age, at establishing a sort of stability. But where the thirteenth century sought to base its stability on an assumed supernatural basis, and the eighteenth within accepted rational limitations of the mind, the Victorian seems rather to have settled its stability upon conduct. To Matthew Arnold, certainly not the most Victorian writer, 'conduct was three-fourths of life'; to Tennyson and Carlyle and Thackeray, to Froude and Trollope and Gladstone, it was almost the whole. George Elliot, far more than the Queen who gave her name to the period, symbolized that



pre-occupation, and was unconsciously recognized as so symbolizing it.

Since conduct was to be the basis of their desired stability a particular kind of conduct was their aim. The Victorian age, like the Augustan, desiring a balance of the forces of the world and a steady possession of their mental selves, retired from and disliked extremes. Sanctity and ecstacy were words alike unknown to it. Enthusiasm, in the earlier technical sense of the word, was an abnormal and alarming thing, a thing as alien to, say Kingsley, as to the author of that eighteenth-century tract which was entitled *The Twelve Apostles not Enthusiasts*. The famous quarrel between Kingsley and Newman might almost be described in the terms of 'enthusiasm'. To Newman a man who always had to tell the entire truth was an extremist of a dangerous and impossible kind. But though in practice Kingsley would have agreed with him, in theory he differed. For telling the truth was exactly a part of that stability of conduct which Kingsley with all his heart admired, and from which he would not allow that there could be any diversion. He was endeavouring, in vain, to include an enthusiastic and romantic extreme of theory in a balanced and classic stability of conduct, and it was the ill-constructed bridge between them which the guns of Newman shattered.

If Romola is a manageable type of high nobility of conduct, Tennyson's King Arthur is an example of nobility become unmanageable, and wavering between nobility and mere pompousness. No great poet has ever been betrayed into a more disastrous episode than that in which Tennyson presented Arthur deploring and extolling the prosaic form of Guinevere; and this, not because what Arthur seems to mean is necessarily wrong or stupid or selfish, but because it is nobility becoming conscious of

itself, and nobility cannot afford to be conscious of itself. The mortal pathos, the immortal symbolism of Arthur are lost in such words as 'I am thy husband, not a smaller soul'; and others wherein the King mouths out his hollow *q's* and *a's*. Tennyson recovered himself in those great and famous lines which describe the King's departure, but it was because Arthur had left off being noble, and was in process of doing something. He had forgotten conduct and was occupied with action.

For perhaps the chief trouble about Victorian literature—and certainly the chief trouble about those now somewhat underrated poems of Tennyson, the *Idylls of the King*—was that its metaphysic could not present nor its withdrawing poetic imagination conceive an end sufficient to the means. To do one's duty was a noble thing, but the only reason for doing it was that it was one's duty. This indeed is a great enough theme for a great poet, if such duty is unmistakable and if tragedy follows upon its fulfilment. But the Victorian mind, though it accepted the first condition—the subtleties of exploration, the illusions of which duty is prolific, were not for that age—rejected the second. Duty faithfully followed and therefore inevitably producing tragedy—interior as well as exterior—would have been one of those extremes of the imagination from which ages which desire a stable mind instinctively recoil. The Optimism of the Victorians was an accidental result of their desire for balance; it was certainly a subdued optimism, by no means so hearty as is sometimes thought, but cheerful enough to exclude intense tragedy, though not pathos. A few witnesses—the *Mill on the Floss*, and pre-eminently the *Ring and the Book*—testified against optimism; and the *Ring and the Book* even abandoned nobility. Pompilia and Caponsacchi in that very great poem are too young, too innocent, too



helpless, too 'enthusiastic' to be called noble; the black household of Guido and the slaving obscenities of the Fies are too vile even to be called ignoble.

But in the *Idylls* Arthur is presented as the soul; and the purpose, the end, of the soul is to do its duty. The King does not reject the Quest of the Grail merely from an artistic necessity, but from the necessity of an inadequate metaphysic. The high Prince Galahad passes across the stage and is gone, and the poem is uneasy in his presence. In that parasitic all the ordinary rules of conduct seem to be left behind; the bridges break down behind the chosen knight as he runs on to the city far out on the waste. It is merely apart from Camelot and the Table; it is merely apart from Arthur and the soul of man. Conduct without any adequate end, duty without interior and eternal significance, morals without metaphysics—these are the guardian angels of the Victorian chivalry and of the King. Lancelot mourns in Tennyson, 'not knowing he should die a holy man'. But in the end of the older story he dies, not necessarily holy but priestly; 'and a twelvemonth he sang mass', and so is assumed into mystery.

The weakness therefore of the Victorian age, as of the *Idylls*, is in its concern with conduct but its failure artistically to suggest an adequate significance in conduct. When, however, it had subjects which came within its scope, when the centre of a poem became no longer an exhortation but a story, when, in short, conduct became simply action, the weakness was no longer felt. Then the greatness of the time appeared, and a score of figures in high moments of triumph or disaster were presented in poignant or exalted verse. Hardly since Chaucer had stories been so well told, and our own period, though in some things it surpasses, in this has scarcely rivalled its

predecessor. Mr. Kipling, Mr. Masfield, Mr. Chesterton—these and a few others—have told us stories, and told them well, but many contemporary poets are too agitated or too dull for the act. In demanding significance they set out to impose significance; Mr. Hardy and Mr. Chesterton answer one another from opposite hills of doctrine, and are equally eclectic in their choice of tales, though perhaps Mr. Chesterton would admit the eclecticism more willingly than his poem.

The poems which follow are drawn from that great period of narrative, and are all concerned chiefly with one thing—telling a story. In one or two of them a flavour of exhortation or instruction is to be distinguished—Browning's *Donald* is the worst example. But the moral there is worked into such an admirable verbal climax that it may easily be excused. Apart from such moments the poems suggest themselves as being at once the continuance and the close of a great tradition. Here, by the chance of the selection, are many of the names of the heroes—Arthur and Olaf, Balder and Kustan, Perceus and Tristram; of dukes and kings, princes of fairy and of fact, myths to which the Victorians willingly submitted themselves. Nobility in action and unconscious of itself, seems to be visible in most of these poems; and where it is not, the variations are characteristic of all that which eventually broke up the Victorian repose. The two possibilities which chiefly disturbed it were malice and ecstasy (say Samuel Butler and Francis Thompson); and except in the *Witch's Ballad* of William Bell Scott, neither of these appear until the admirable Christina's *Goblin Market*. Their presence determines the departure of nobility which is, in itself, incapable of either. The 'noble' hero cannot be swept out of himself into a supernatural abandonment or betrayed into a sub-human hate. Look,



in Arnold's *Balder Dead*, is hardly convincing in his hostility; he is part of the necessity of a story which is defended by its sub-title of 'An Episode'. The old duchess in Browning's poem is not so much malicious as tyrannical and greedy; and apart from these two figures the catastrophes with which the heroes variously contend are rather of the nature of inevitable destiny. The day on which the Round Table was dissolved in battle and death was a day of thick mist; the fatal duel between Sohrah and Rustam is a strife between two unknowns; Balder dies by the destined forgetfulness of his mother as well as by the haze of Lok; in *Conan* the fiery minstrel misleads the king's men who leave their lord to his doom; the vengeance of the gods punishes Andromeda, as the love of a goddess for Perseus saves her. The gipsy woman who lures the Duchess from her home is 'of another nature' than she at first appeared. In Morris's *Son of Green* the doom which Croesus labours in vain to avert from his son is foreshown in a dream. 'The sea hath no king but God above', is the refrain of Russett's *White Ship*.

Not at its best the nobility of the Victorians contended with great adversaries, with time and the nature of the gods and fate. Around it existed, as it very well knew, 'darkness and cruel habitations'. It was heroic and steadfast, and when it lost, as in the *King's Tragedy* or *Heather Ale*, its doom came to it, it passed as strongly as it had lived. To explore the darkness, whether in philosophy or poetry, it did not primarily hold to be its business. Herbert Spencer called those other modes of being 'the Unknowns', but the name was rather an indication of the Victorian temper than philosophically sound. In the *Witch's Ballad* and *Judas Iscariot* some sort of imaginative codes into the unknown is attempted, something of the

strangeness of the magical dance or the star above the sky is conveyed, as in *Cobbin Market* is something of the sub-human malice of the devils.

The only incomplete poem in the book is the extract from Swinburne. Swinburne was nearly incapable of telling a story directly; in this, and almost in this alone, he differed from the other great Victorians. It is true that he reversed their code of conduct, and praised the things that they blamed; physical love and revolution and tyrannicide. But this reversal did not alter his central concern, which was as much conduct as George Eliot's was, and lacked a satisfactory metaphysic as much as did Tennyson's. He did however, reversing the code, reverse the attitude, and nobility is not the virtue which chiefly distinguishes his characters. They are praised for the abandonment with which they give themselves to their experiences; they are praised for their conduct, but the significance of conduct is not greatly conveyed. The opening of *Tristram* is magnificent, but it does not suggest the intense interest and importance of love, as much as certain Jacobean lyrics. So the magnificence of the lines given here does not succeed in presenting Palamede as the strange and exalted figure which moves through Malory. Much less should go rather, it seems, from a sense of helplessness in the recollection of his promise than from a mad and passionate loyalty to it. But, perhaps by accident, there is also in this episode a suggestion of something beyond the Victorian age. For Palamede refrains from kissing Isolt, not only because of honour and nobility, but because:

More grace might come of that sweet mouth unlied  
Than joy for violence done it.

There hath for a moment in those lines the silver chastity of Britomart and the lady in *Conan*.



## PREFACE

Nobility is at the moment an unfashionable virtue in literature. Subtlety is preferred to it, and irony, and bitterness; just as allusiveness and the lyric are preferred to the direct narrative style. But as the Victorian age recedes it is taking on the strangeness of any past century. The side-whiskers of Arnold are no more ridiculous than the long curls of Prince Rupert or the formal beards of the Pharisee. So their characteristic attitude, for all its dangers of pomposity and insincerity, is seen to be a real method of dealing with the crises of experience, whether interior or exterior. These poems are a tribute to its endeavour and its success.

Also, of course, they can be read as satires.

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C.W.

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## THE DAY-DREAM

### PROLOGUE

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :  
A pleasant hour has past away  
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,  
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.  
As by the lattice you reclined,  
I went thro' many wayward moods  
To see you dreaming—and, behind,  
A summer crisp with shining woods.  
And I too dream'd, until at last  
Across my fancy, brooding warm,  
The reflex of a legend past,  
And loosely settled into form,  
And would you have the thought I had,  
And see the vision that I saw,  
Then take the broidery-frame, and add  
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,  
And I will tell it. Turn your face,  
Nor look with that too-earnest eye—  
The rhymes are dazzled from their place,  
And order'd words asunder fly.

### THE SLEEPING PALACE

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains;  
Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
Here stays the blood along the veins.



# ALFRED TENNYSON

Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,  
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,  
Like hints and echoes of the world  
To spirits folded in the womb.

## II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
On every slanting terrace-lawn  
The fountain to his place returns  
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
Hark droops the banner on the tower,  
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
The peacock in his laurel bower,  
The parrot in his gilded wires.

## III

Roof-bruening martins warm their eggs :  
In these, in these the life is stay'd.  
The nestles from the golden page  
Droop sleepily : no sound is made,  
Not even of a guest that sings.  
More like a picture seemeth all  
Than these old portraits of old kings,  
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

## IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask  
Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and there  
The wrinkled steward at his task,  
The maid of honour blooming fair :  
The page has caught her hand in his :  
Her lips are sever'd as to speak :  
His own are parted to a kiss :  
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

# THE DAY-DREAM

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
The beams, that thro' the Oriol shine,  
Make prisms in every carven glass,  
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.  
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
His state the king reposing keeps.  
He must have been a jovial king.

## VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
At distance like a little wood ;  
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
And grapes with bunches red as blood :  
All creeping plants, a wall of green  
Close-matted, but and brake and brier,  
And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
High up, the topmost palace-spire.

## VII

When will the hundred summers die,  
And thought and time be worn again,  
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?  
Here all things in their place remain,  
As all were order'd, ages since.  
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

# THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Year after year unto her feet,  
She lying on her couch alone,  
Across the purpled coverlet,  
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,



On either side her tranced form  
 Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:  
 The dambrous light is rich and warm,  
 And moves not on the rounded curl.

## II

The silk star-broider'd covertid,  
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
 Languidly ever; and, amid  
 Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,  
 Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
 With bracelets of the diamond bright;  
 Her constant beauty doth inform  
 Stillness with love, and day with light.

## III

She sleeps: her breathings are not heard  
 In palace chambers far apart.  
 The fragrant tresses are not stir'd  
 That lie upon her charmed heart.  
 She sleeps: on either hand upswells  
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest;  
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
 A perfect form in perfect rest.

## THE ARRIVAL

All precious things, discover'd late,  
 To those that seek them issue forth;  
 For love in equal works with fate,  
 And draws the veil from hidden worth.  
 He traveh far from other skies—  
 His mantle glitters on the rock—  
 A Fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
 And lighter-footed than the fox.

## II

The bodies and the bones of those  
 That strove on other days to pass,  
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
 He gazes on the silent dead;  
 'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'  
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,  
 'The many fail: the one succeeds.'

## III

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks:  
 He breaks the hedge: he enters there:  
 The colour flies into his cheeks:  
 He trusts to light on something fair;  
 For all his life the alarm did talk  
 About his path, and hover near  
 With words of promise in his walk,  
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.

## IV

More close and close his footsteps wind:  
 The Magic Music in his heart  
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
 The quiet chamber far apart.  
 His spirit flutters like a lark,  
 He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.  
 'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
 How dark those hidden eyes must be!'

## THE ARRIVAL

A ruck, a hiss! the charm was snapt.  
 There was a noise of striking clocks,  
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
 And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;



# ALFRED TENNYSON

A falter light illumined all,  
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,  
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

140

The bridge broke on the banner-blew  
The birds drank, the upward scrawled,  
The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,  
The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clack'd,  
And on the long-pont stream of life  
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

145

And last with these the king awoke,  
And none else stirr'd himself appear'd,  
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,  
"By now good, a royal beard."

150

"How say you? we have slept, my lords,  
My beard has grown into my lap."  
The barons swear with many words,  
"Twas but an after-dinner's nap."

155

"Tut, tut," return'd the king, "but still  
My joints are something stiff or so.  
My word, and shall we pass the bill  
I mention'd not an hour ago?"  
The chancellor sedate and vain,  
In masterly words return'd reply,  
But dallied with his gilded chair,  
And, smiling, put the question by.

160

## THE DAY DREAM

### THE DEPARTURE

And on her lover's arm she leant,  
And round her waist she felt it fold,  
And far across the hills they went  
In that new world which is the old,  
Across the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
And deep into the dying day  
The happy princes follow'd him.

165

170

"I'd sleep another hundred years,  
O love, for such another kiss,"  
"O wake for ever, love," she hears,  
"O love, 'twas such as this and this."  
And o'er them many a sliding star,  
And many a merry wind was borne,  
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
The twilight melted into morn."

175

180

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep,"  
"O happy sleep, that lightly fled,"  
"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep,"  
"O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!"  
And o'er them many a flowing range  
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-moon,  
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
The twilight died into the dawn.

185

190

"A hundred summers can it be?  
And whither goes she, and tell me where?"  
"O seek my father's court with me,  
For there are greater women there."



And over the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
Beyond the night, across the day,  
Through all the world she follow'd him

## MORAL

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And if you find no moral there,  
Go, look in any glass and say,  
What mortal is in being fair.  
Oh, what use shall we put  
The wildwood flower that simply blows?  
And is there any moral shut  
Within the bloom of the rose?

## II

But any man that walks the mead,  
In bud or blade, or blossom, may find,  
According as his humours lead,  
A meaning suited to his mind.  
And liberal applications he  
In Art like Nature's dearest friend;  
So 'twere to trump its use, if I  
Should look it in some useful end.

## THE END

You shake your head. A random string  
Your finer female sense offends,  
Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
To fall asleep with all one's friends;  
To pass with all our social ties  
To shun the paths of men;  
And every hundred years to the  
And learn the world, and learn again?

To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
And wake on science grown to more,  
On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
As wild as aught of fairy lore;  
And all that else the years will show,  
The Post-fronts of stronger hours,  
The vast Republics that may grow,  
The Federations and the Powers  
Titanic forces taking birth  
In diverse seasons, diverse climes,  
For we are Ancients of the earth,  
And in the morning of the things.

## I

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
Thro' sunny decades new and strange,  
Or gay quinquennads would we reap  
The flower and quintessence of change.

## III

Alas, yet would I—and would I might—  
So much your eyes my fancy take—  
Be still the first to leap to light  
That I might kiss those eyes awake.  
For, am I right or am I wrong,  
To choose your own you did not leave;  
You'd have my moral from the song,  
And I will take my pleasure there  
And, am I right or am I wrong,  
My fancies, longing thro' and thro',  
To search a meaning for the song,  
Perforce will still revert to you;  
Quinquennads, products of five years.



# ALFRED TENNYSON

Not finds a closer truth than this  
 A graceful head, so richly curPd,  
 And evermore a costly kiss  
 The prelude to some brighter world.

17

For space the time when Adam first  
 Embroid'ed his life in happy hour  
 And every bird of Eden burst  
 In carol, every bud to flower,  
 What eyes, like mine, have waken'd hopes?  
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly joind?  
 Where on the double rose bud droops  
 The fullness of the peacock's mind,  
 Which all too dearly self-involves,  
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me;  
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
 That lets thee neither hear nor see  
 But break it. In the name of wife,  
 And in the rights that name may give,  
 Art clasp'd the moral of thy life  
 And that for which I care to live.

## EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my love,  
 And, if you find a meaning there,  
 O whisper to your glass, and say  
 "What wonder, if he thinks me fair?"  
 What wonder I was all unwise,  
 To shape the song for your delight  
 Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise,  
 That float thro' Heaven, and cannot light?  
 Or adroit trams, upheld at court  
 By cupid boys of blooming hue—  
 But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
 And rather sated unto you.

# MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
 Among the mountains by the winter sea,  
 Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
 Had fall'n in Lynnesse about their Lord,  
 King Arthur; then, because his wound was deep,  
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the Rock,  
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land  
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
 Lay a great water, and the moon was full.  
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere  
 "The sequel of to-day unfolds all  
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
 Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep  
 They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we  
 Shall never more, at any future time,  
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,  
 Walking about the gardens and the halls  
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
 I perish by this perilous which I made,—  
 The Merlin swore that I should come again  
 To rule once more—but let what will be, be,  
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the heart  
 That without help I cannot last till morn.  
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalbur,  
 Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how  
 In those hot days, one summer noon, an arm  
 Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

\*sam[ite] rich silk fabric.



Holding the sword—and how I row : across  
And to-day, and have worn a, like a king,  
And wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, thus also shall be known :  
But now delay not : take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere :  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.

To him returned the bold Sir Bedivere  
‘It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus :  
I will not, and smitten thro’ the heart,  
The thing may harm a wounded man.  
Yet I thy best will all perform at last,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.’

So saying, from the ruin’d dinner he stepped  
And in the moon athwart the place of tomos,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam, He, stepping down  
By zig-zag rocks, and jets of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o’er him, drawing it, the wipster moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and faceted-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long

That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,  
The way and want dividing the swift mind,  
In apt to throw : but at the last it seem’d  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal’d  
There in the many-knotted waterflag,  
That whistled it and it about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
‘Hast thou perform’d my mission which I gave ?  
What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?’

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
‘I heard the ripples washing in the reeds,  
And the cold water lapping on the flag  
To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :  
‘Thou hast not say’d thy name and thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as becom’d  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight  
For sure sign had follow’d, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.’

This is a shameful thing for men to do.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
As thou art bid and dear, and do the thing  
I bid thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.’

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix’d in thought  
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How gloriously and strangely chased, he smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud,

‘And if indeed I cast the brand away  
Surely a precious thing, and worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men,  
What good should follow this, if this were done  
What harm, and long deep harm to doleful,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.’

Were it well to obey then, if a King demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself  
The King is wick, and knows not what he does.  
What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath



14 And remembrance of a doubt? but were this kept,  
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty long,  
 Some one might show it at a point of time,  
 Saying "King Arthur's sword. Excalbur,  
 Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
 Nine years ago wrought it, sitting in the deep,  
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills."  
 So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
 To all the people, winning reverence.  
 But now much honour and much fame were lost.

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
 And had Excalbur the second time,  
 And so rode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur, breathing heavily  
 'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
 And the long ripples washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath  
 'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,

Unknightly, traitor-hearted. Woe is me!  
 Authority forgets a dying king.  
 Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
 That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
 In whom should meet the offices of all,  
 Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or love a girl  
 Valuing the folly pleasure of the eyes,  
 Yet for a man may fail in duty twice,  
 And the third time may prosper, get thee hence

But, if thou carest of King Excalbur,  
 I will arise and lay thee with my hands,  
 That good day rose Sir Bedivere, and ran.

And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
 135 Among the bulrush-beds, and clench'd the sword,  
 And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand  
 Made light again in the splendour of the moon,  
 And flashing round and round, and whir'd in air,  
 Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
 40 Seen where the moving ales of winter shock  
 By night, with noises of the northern sea  
 So flash'd and fell the brand Excalbur.  
 But ere he dight the surface, rose an arm  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
 145 And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
 And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spake King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:  
 'Now see! I by thine eyes that this is done.

150 Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gums  
 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,

35 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt,  
 'Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;  
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

160 That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'  
 And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:  
 'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.  
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,

165 And bear me to the margin; yet I fear  
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he had rose,



Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. He in Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken but he found not words,  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs,  
But as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
Muttering and muttering at his ear, 'Quick, quick!  
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'  
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
Cloaked with his breach, and looking, as he walk'd,  
Faster than human on the frozen hills.  
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.  
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
His feet on jets of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—  
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.  
Then saw they how there lay a dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stern to stern,  
Repeath them; and descending they were wate  
That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
Black-robed, black hooded, like a dream by these  
The dark and high crowns of gold—and from them rose  
A cry that shalld to the tingling stars,  
And, as it came one voice, an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wail, that shrills

All night in a waste land, where no-one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.  
Then marmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge;  
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens  
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.  
But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap;  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,  
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white  
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops  
Of onset; and the light and rustious curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dark eyebrows—were parch'd with dust;  
Or, dotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.  
So like a shatter'd column lay the King,  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
From spur to phurca star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.  
Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
'Al! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
Where shall I bade my forehead and my eyes?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
Such times have been not since the light that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh

greaves] armour for the leg below the knee.  
cuisses] armour for protecting the front part of the thigh.



But now the whole round table is dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty world;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds,

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:  
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,

Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?  
I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
May He within Himself make pure. But thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of.' Wherefore, at thy voice  
Rose like a fountain for me night and day,

For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?

'For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.'

But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)

To the island valley of Avonport,  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,

Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer trees,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
Moved from the bank, like some full-breasted swimmer  
That, fluting a wild-carol at her death,

Ruffles her pure ead plume, and takes the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away.

ALFRED TENNYSON, 1809-92.

## THE DEATH OF KING OLAF

FROM THE SAGA OF KING OLAF.

XVII

KING SVEND OF THE FORKED BEARD

LOUDLY THE SAILORS HEARD  
SVEND of the Forked Beard,  
As with his fleet he steered  
Southward to Vendland,  
Where with their courses hauled  
All were together cased,  
Under the Isle of Svand  
Near to the mainland.

AFTER Queen Gunhild's death,  
So the old Saga saith,  
Frighted King Svend his faith  
To Sigrd the Haugtry,  
And to avenge his bride,  
Soothing her wounded pride,  
Over the waters wide

King Olaf sought he,

Still on her scornful face,  
Blushing with deep disgrace,  
Bore she the common name

Of Olaf's gauner,  
Like a malignant star,  
Blazing in heaven afar,  
Rei thone the angry scar  
Under her frown let.

Of to King Svend she spake,  
For thine own honour's sake

## THE DEATH OF KING OLAF

21

Shalt thou swift vengeance take  
On the vile coward!

Unto King at last,  
Gusty and overcast,  
Like a tempestuous blast  
Threatened and lowered.

Soon as the Spring appeared,  
Svend of the Forked Beard  
High his red standard reared,  
Eager for battle;  
While every warlike Dane,  
Seizing his arms again,  
Left ad unsown the grain,  
Unhoused the cattle.

Likewise the Swedish King  
Summoned in haste a Thing,  
Weapons and men to bring  
In aid of Denmark,  
Eric the Norseman, too,  
As the war adings flew,  
Sailed with a chosen crew  
From Lapland and Finmark.

So upon Easter day  
Sailed the three kings away,  
Out on the sheltered bay,  
In the bright season;  
With them Earl Sigvald came,  
Eager for spoil and fame;  
Pity that such a name  
Stooped to such treason.

Safe under Svold at last,  
Now were their anchors cast,





'Safe from the sea and blast,  
Plotted the three kings;  
While, with a base intent  
Southward Earl Sigvald went,  
On a foul errand bent,  
Unto the Sea-king.

Thence to hold on his course,  
Unto King Olaf's force,  
Lying within the hoarse  
Mounts of Stet-haven;  
Him to ensnare and bring  
Unto the Danish king,  
Who his dead corpse would fling  
Forth to the raven.

## XVIII

## KING OLAF AND EARL SIGVALD

On the gray sea-sides  
King Olaf stands;  
Northward and seaward  
He points with his hands:  
With eddy and whirl  
The sea-tides curl,  
Washing the sands  
Of Sigvald the Earl.

The mariners shout,  
The ships swing about,  
The yards are all hauled,  
The sails flutter out.  
The war-horns are played,  
The anchors are weighed,  
Like moths in the distance  
The sails flit and fade.

The sea is like lead,  
The harbour lies dead,  
As a corpse on the sea-shore,  
Whose spirit has fled!

On that fatal day,  
The histories say,  
Seventy vessels  
Sailed out of the bay

But soon scattered wide  
O'er the billows they ride,  
While Sigvald and Olaf  
Saw side by side.

Cried the Earls: 'Follow me!  
I your pilot will be,  
For I know all the channels  
Where flows the deep sea.'

So into the strait  
Where his foes lie in wait,  
Gallant King Olaf  
Sails to his fate!

Then the sea-fog veils  
The ships and their sails;  
Queen Sigrid the Haughty,  
Thy vengeance prevails!

## XIX

## KING OLAF'S WAR-HORN

'Struck the sails! King Olaf said;  
'Never shall men of mine take flight;  
Never away from battle I fled,  
Never away from my foes.  
Let God dispose  
Of my life in the fight!'

"Sound the horn!" said Olaf the King.

And suddenly through the drifting brume

The blast of the horns began to ring,

Like the terrible trumpet shock

Of Ragnarok,

On the Day of Doom!

Louder and louder the war-horns sang

Over the level floor of the flood;

All the silk came down with a clang,

And there in the mist overhead

The sun hung red

As a drop of blood.

Drifting down on the Danish fleet

Three together the ships were lashed,

So that neither should turn and retreat;

In the midst, but in front of the rest

The burnished crest

Of the Serpent flashed.

King Olaf stood on the quarter-deck,

With bow of ash and arrows of oak,

His gilded shield was without a flick,

His helmet inlaid with gold,

And in many a fold

Hung his crimson cloak.

On the fore-castle Ulf the Red

Watched the lashing of the ships;

"If the Serpent lie so far ahead,

We shall have hard work of it here!"

Said he with a sneer

On his bearded lips.

King Olaf laid an arrow on a string,

"Have I a coward on board?" said he.

## THE DEATH OF KING OLAF

"Shoot it another way, O King."

Sullenly answered Ulf,

The old sea-wolf

"You have need of me!"

In front came Svend, the King of the Danes,  
Sweeping down with his fifty rowers;

To the right, the Swedish king with his thanes;

And on board of the Iron Beard

Earl Eric steered

To the left, with his oars.

"These soft Danes and Swedes," said the King,

"At home with their wives had better stay,

Than come within reach of my Serpent's sting:

But where Eric the Norseman leads

Heroic deeds

Will be done to-day!"

Then as together the vessels crashed,

Eric severed the cables of hide,

With which King Olaf's ships were lashed,

And left them to drive and drift

With the currents swift

Of the outward tide.

Louder the war-horns growl and anvil

Sharper the dragons bite and sting!

Eric the son of Hakon Jarl

A death-drink salt as the sea

Pledges to thee,

Olaf the King!



## XX

## EINAR TAMBERSKELVER

It was Einar Tamberskelver  
 Stood beside the mast;  
 From his yew-bow, tipped with silver,  
 Flew the arrows fast;  
 Aimed at Eric unavailing,  
 As he sat concealed,  
 Half behind the quarter-railing,  
 Half behind his shield.

First an arrow struck the tiller,  
 Just above his head;  
 'Sing, O Eyvind Skaldaspiller,  
 Then Earl Eric said,  
 'Sing the song of Hakon dying;  
 Sing his funeral-wail!  
 And another arrow flying  
 Grazed his coat of mail.

Turning to a Lapland yeoman,  
 As the arrow passed,  
 Said Earl Eric, 'Shoot that bowman  
 Standing by the mast;  
 Sooner than the word was spoken  
 Flew the yeoman's shaft;  
 Einar's bow in twain was broken,  
 Einar only laughed.

'What was that?' said Olaf, standing  
 On the quarter-deck.  
 'Something heard I like the stranding  
 Of a shattered wreck.'

## THE DEATH OF KING OLAF

Einar then, the arrow taking  
 From the loosened string,  
 Answered, 'That was Norway breaking  
 From thy hand, O King.'

'Thou art but a poor diviner,'  
 Straightway Olaf said;  
 'Take my bow, and swiftest Einar,  
 Let thy shafts be sped,  
 Of his bows the farthest choosing,  
 Reached he from above;  
 Einar saw the blood-drops oozing  
 Through his iron glove.

But the bow was thin and narrow;  
 At the first assay,  
 O'er its head he drew the arrow,  
 Flung the bow away;  
 Said, with hot and angry temper,  
 Flushing in his cheek,  
 'Olaf! for so great a Kämpar  
 Are thy bows too weak.'

Then, with smile of joy defiant  
 On his beardless lip,  
 Sealed he, light and self-reliant,  
 Eric's dragon-ship.  
 Loose his golden locks were flowing,  
 Bright his armour gleamed;  
 Like Saint Michael overthrowing  
 Lucifer he seemed.

## KING OLAF'S DEATH-DRINK

All day has the battle raged,

All day have the ships engaged,

But not yet is assuaged

The vengeance of Eric the Earl.

The decks with blood are red,

The arrows of death are sped,

The ships are filled with the dead,

And the spears the champions hurl.

They drift as wrecks on the tide,

The grappling-irons are piled,

The boarders climb up the side,

The shouts are few and few.

Ah! never shall Norway again

See her sailors come back o'er the main,

They all lie wounded or slain,

Or asleep in the billows blue!

On the deck stands Olaf the King,

Around him whistle and sing

The spears that the foemen fling,

And the stones they hurl with their hands.

In the midst of the stones and the spears,

Kolbjörn, the marshal, appears,

His shield in the air he uprears,

By the side of King Olaf he stands.

Over the slippery wreck

Of the Long Serpent's deck

Sweeps Eric with hardly a check,

His lips with anger are pale;

## THE DEATH OF KING OLAF

He hews with his axe at the mast,

Till it falls, with the sails overcast,

Like a snow-covered pine in the vast

Dun forests of Orkadale.

Seeking King Olaf then,

He rushes aft with his men,

As a hunter into the den

Of the bear, when he stands at bay.

'Remember Jarl Heston!' he cries;

When lo! on his wondering eyes

Two kingly figures arise,

'Two Olafs in warlike array'

Then Kolbjörn speaks in the ear

Of King Olaf a word of cheer,

In a whisper that none may hear,

With a smile on his tremulous lip.

Two shields raised high in the air

Two flashes of golden hair,

Two scarlet meteors' glare,

And both have leaped from the ship.

Earl Eric's men in the boats

Seize Kolbjörn's shield as it floats,

And cry, from their hairy throats,

'See! it is Olaf the King.'

While far on the opposite side

Floats another shield on the tide,

Like a jewel set in the wide

Sea-curtain's eddying ring.

There is told a wonderful tale,

How the King stripped off his mail,

Like leaves of the brown sea-kale,

As he swam beneath the main.



Edt the young grew old and gray,  
And never, by night or by day,  
In his kingdom of Norröway  
Was King Olaf seen again!

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, 1807-82.

## CONARY

## Introductory Note.

THE old Irish Bar lies in the destruction of the house *Brúidín* of Da-Derga: for my first acquaintance with which I am indebted to Mr. W. M. Hennessy—furnishes the ground-work of this piece; but it will not be understood that "Conary" pretends to be a full reproduction of the *Togad-brúidín da-dergae*, or that some incidents are drawn from that source.

The *Brúidín* is generally regarded as having been a kind of Caravanserai; and there were good grounds for accepting the idea of the late ingenious Mr. Crooke that it represents, in the west of Europe, the *Phylæum* or house of state-hospitality of the ancient Greeks. There appear to have been six principal places of this kind in Ireland at the commencement of the Christian era, and one of these, called *Brúidín-Da-Derga*, is said to have been the scene of the death of King Conary Mór, whose reign is made to synchronize with the close of the Pagan period, under the circumstances related in the tale.

The classical reader will find in the *Togad* a curious—probably an unexpected—illustration of the old eastern method of commencing a military expedition. There, the forces, before departing on their campaign, cast each man an arrow into a common receptacle from which, on their return, each man withdrew an arrow; and the weapons remaining represented the dead and missing. (*Prom. et bell. Pers.* l. ii. c. ii.) The actors in the *Togad* cast every man, as one into a common heap, or urn, and what remained after each survivor had withdrawn his stone, served as the census and memorial of the slain.

The singular and terrible properties ascribed to the Spear of Lailar in the *Togad* may not be without some bearing on Homer's *εὐπρόσθετος μολύβειος δολιχόμυρος* in reference to the Spear of Diomedes.

The *Togad* also contributes its evidence to the great antiquity of the leading line of highway. There were five of these "straits" radiating from Tara, the two mentioned in the tale together corresponding pretty nearly with the old post-road from Dublin to the north. The author of the *Togad* places the site of *Brúidín-Da-Derga* on the River Dodder, in the ancient territory of Cuairn, near Dublin, where *Ueberrathraqua*, or "Road of the Brúidín," still preserves the

name. The fact of a sea-invasion corresponding in its main features with the descent of the pirates on the coasts of Meath and Dublin, as chronicled in the Book of Howth, and also given very vividly in local oral tradition about Balrothery and Balinaggan.

Full peace was Enn's under Conary,  
Till—though his brethren by the tender tie  
Of fosterage—Don Dema's lawless sons,  
Fer-ger, Fer-gel, and vengeful Fergobar,  
For crimes that justly had demanded death,  
By judgement mild he sent in banishment;  
Yet wrung his own fraternal heart the while,  
Whose brother, Ferragon and Lomna Druth,  
Drawn by affection's ties, and thinking scorn  
To stay behind while others led the way  
To brave adventure, in their exile joined.

Banished the land of Enn, on the sea  
They roamed, and, roaming, with the pirate hordes  
Of British Ingeel leagued—and this their pact.  
The spoil of Britain's and of Alba's coasts  
To fall to them, and Enn's counter-spoil  
To fall to Ingeel. Britain's border first  
They ravaged, and in one pernicious raid  
Of sack and slaughter indiscriminate,  
Ingeel's own father and his brethren seven  
By chance sojourning with the victims, slew.  
Then, Alba sacked, said Ingeel, 'Sister we now  
For Enn, and the promised counter-spoil'

'Tis just, and welcome to our souls as well,  
For outrage unavenged, said Fergobar  
'Tis just—it is 'by right,' said Ferragon.  
'Tis just, and woe it is!' said Lomna Druth.

'Twas then that Conary from strife-composed  
By kindly counsel, 'twixt contending words,

So Of distant Inhomond, held his journey home,  
But, when in sight of Tara, lo, the sky  
On every side reflected using flame  
And gleam of arms. 'What that?' cried Conary.  
A certain Druid was there in the train  
Who answered, 'Often did I warn thee, King,  
This journey at this season was ill-timed,  
As made in violation of the *gaysh*  
That King of Tara shall not judge a cause  
Except in Tara's proper judgment had  
From Beltane-day to Mly-day'

'Yea, in truth,  
I do remember now,' said Conary,  
'Amongst my prohibitions that is one,  
Which thoughtlessly I've broken. Strange it is  
That act for speedy justice and for peace'  
Accomplished, should, with God, be esteemed.  
But, since Religion's awful voice forbids,  
I pray forgiveness of offended Heaven.  
Whose anger at my fault too plain I see,  
And vow amendment at thy own award.  
But, with thy way now—'

'Ride northward to the track  
Where Street Mid na h-ara and Street Cualann join,  
There, choice of highway waits us, north or south.'  
Northward they rode. 'What be these moving brads  
Before us? Nay, 'tis but a running drove  
Of antiered stags. Whence come they? and whence from  
These unsetting flights of fowl above our heads?'  
These be wild brood of Clanc Mílegarna's den.'  
Replied the druid, 'It is another *gaysh*  
For Tara's King to see them save their lives  
After mid-day; and ill will come of it'

*gaysh*] usual ordinance or prohibition.



"Ghosts of evil gather round my path,  
 Though thought of evil in my breast is none;  
 Said Conary, and heaved a heavy sigh;  
 "Yet, since I reign by law, and holy men  
 Charged with the keeping of the law, declare  
 That shalt not-so-and-so, at such a time  
 Do or leave undone, it beseems not me  
 To question for what end the law is so:  
 Though, were it but a human ordinance,  
 'Twere, haply, counted childish: but, go to,  
 I own another violated *gaysn*;  
 I pray forgiveness of offended Heaven,  
 And, since some fierce invading enemy—  
 Misguided brothers, that it be not you!—  
 Bars our approach to Tara, let us dispose  
 Cualann highroad, for Cualann-ward there dwell  
 One whom I once befriended; and I know  
 His home will give me shelter for to-night,  
 Know I aight the way that leads to it."  
 "Name of the man, oh King?" demanded Cecht  
 ("Fly ye, fly ye all, fly ye before the face  
 Of Cecht, the battle-sidesman of the King"),  
 The biggest man yet gentlest-countenanced  
 Of all that rode in Conary's company.  
 "Da Derga he," said Conary.

Said Cecht. "Street Cualann whereon now we are  
 Leads straight to Brú na Derga, and leads straight  
 Through and beynd it. 'Tis a house of rest  
 For all that come and go, where ready shift  
 The raveler finds the wind-wied fuel stack,  
 The cauldron dung, the ale-vat on the floor,  
 A strong, fast-mansion. Seven good doors it has,  
 And seven good bescherers betwixt door and door."

And seven good couches spread 'twixt bench and bench.  
 95 All that attend thee now, and all that come—  
 See where they come along Midhaach's track,  
 The host of Emain, in good time I judge,  
 Journeying south: shall nothing wait for room  
 I shall go forward, for my duty it is.  
 100 To enter first at nightfall, when my king  
 Comes to his lodging; and with flint and steel  
 Kindle the fire whose flame shall guide him home.  
 Then forth, at gallop of his steeds, went Cecht;  
 While, slower following, Conary was aware  
 105 Of three that rode before them on the way  
 Red were their coursers and their mantles red,  
 Red, too, their caps, blood-red—

"Another *gaysn*."

Said Conary. "I also call to mind  
 Amid my prohibitions this is one,  
 110 To follow three red-tars on the way;  
 Injunction idle, were it not divine.  
 After them, Ferflath; stay them till we pass."  
 Then the light laid young Ferflath, Conary's son,  
 Sprang forth at gallop on the red men's track,  
 115 And called his message shrilly from behind,  
 But failed to overtake them. He who rode  
 Last of the triad sang him back a lay—

"Water, oh youth, oh slight swift-riding youth,  
 On back, on neck, on shoulder high fly borne,  
 120 Water will quench; fire burn; and shocks of hair  
 At horrid tidings, upon warriors' heads  
 Bristle as reeds in water; water; ho."  
 Ferflath returned, and told to Conary  
 The lay the red men sang; and ay, he said,  
 125 "I rode, I think, as lightly as myself,  
 And know not what he meant: but sure I am

These are not men of mankind, as we are,  
But fairy men and ministers of ill.

Now then," said Conary, "let every geysh  
That dread Religion with hard-knotting hand  
Bind on the King of Tara, for to-day  
Be broken." Let them go. They may precede;  
May tie their red steeds at the great hall door,  
And choose their seats within; and I, the King,  
May follow, and accept the traveller's place  
Last to attain the inn. Well, be it so

Respect departs with fortune's one-day change.  
But, friends, despond not, you. Though few we be  
In midst of these marauders (oh, my heart  
Perbid the rising thought that these be they!)  
Yet shall we soon be many; for they come,  
They whom on Street Midnachra late we saw,  
Now following on Street Cuann. In good time  
They join us; for, be sure such chariot-throng  
Leaves not the borders of the warlike North,  
But champions good come with it. Let us in.

While thus spake Conary, the pirates' scouts  
Who watched the coast, put off to where the fleet,  
Stray'd on the heaving ridges of the main,  
Lay off Ben Eder. Ingeel's galley reached,  
High on the prow they found him looking forth,  
As from a crag o'er-hanging grassy lands  
Where home-bred cattle graze, the lion glares  
A-hungred; and, behind, as meaner beasts  
That wait the lion's onset for their share,  
Outlewd and reprobate of many a land,  
The ravening crew. Beside him, right and left,  
Stood Lomra, Ferragon, and Lergobar,  
Which Lomra is the cousin of his cloak  
Wore a gold brooch, embossed with flashing gems

Choicest by far of all their spoils yet won;  
And Ingeel thus demanded of the spies

"What saw ye, say?"

"A chariot-cavalcade

A long Street Cuann moving from the north,  
Splendid the show of lofty-pacing steeds,  
And glittering war-cars; chariots seventeen  
We counted. In the first were reverend men,  
Poets, bards, or judges. After these  
Heralds, it seem'd, or high apparitors.  
Then giv' the world to know a great one comes,  
He in the third car rode; an aged man,  
Full grey, majestic, of face serene,  
Followed by household numerous and strong,  
Cooks, butlers, door-wards, cup-bearers, and grooms."

"What heard ye?"

"From a vast hall's open doors

The stroke of steel on flint at kindling fire;  
And every stroke so sounded at the arm  
That gave it were a giant's, and every shower  
Of sparks it shed—as if a summer sky  
Lightened at eve—illumined the dark around."

"What this, good Ferragon, who best of all  
Knowest Erin, hill and valley, thangs and men?"  
Said Ingeel. Ferragon made answer slow,  
For, first, his soul said thus within himself,  
"Oh, roya, brother, that it be not thou!"—

"I know not what may be this open hall  
With fire at hand uncess, baidke, it be  
Dr-Derga's guest-house, which, for all who come  
By Cuann Street, stands open, wherein still  
Firewood stands stack'd and broken cauldrons hang



Slung ready, and clear water running through;  
Brudin-Da-Derga!

\* \* And the man who strikes  
The flint and steel to kindle fire thereon!

'I know not if it be not that he be  
Some king's fore-runner, sent before a king  
To kindle fire ere yet the king himself  
And royal household reach their festing-place'

'And he who in the thirdest chariot rode,  
He who is grey, serene, majestic!'

'I know not if it be not that he be  
Some king of Erin's sub-kings who, to-night,  
Rest in Da-Derga's hospitable hall'

'Up sail! To shore!' cried Ingeel; and the fleet,  
As flight of wild-geese startled from a fen,  
Displayed their wings of white, and made the land.

'Twas at Troy Furveen, and the sun was down;  
But, from Da-Derga's hall so streamed the light,  
It shone at distance as a ruddy star;

And thitherward the host o'er moor and fell  
Marched straight, but when behind a shattering hoall  
Hard by, but still concealed, the ranks were drawn,  
'Make now our camp,' said Ingeel, and the host  
Defiling past him, cast, each man, his stone  
All in one heap,

'When this night's work is done,'

Said Ingeel, 'he who shall return alive  
Shall take his stone again. Who not returns,  
His stone shall here remain his monument.

And now, before we make the trial of who  
Returns and who stays yonder, let us send  
Scout Mucroth—for he bears the power of sight  
And far-off hearing far above us all—

To spy the house and bring us speedy word  
Of all he sees and hears, outside and in;  
So shall we judge how best to win the same.'

125 Forth went the spy; they waited by their cairn,  
Till, gliding as a shadow, he returned  
And round him, as he came, they drew a ring,  
Round him and Ingeel and Don Déssa's sons,  
And round their destined stones of memory.

130 'What sawest thou outward?'

'Outward of the house  
I saw, drawn up at every guarded door,  
Full seventeen chariots; and, between the spokes,  
Spying, I saw, to-rings of iron tied,  
At end and side wall, thirteen hundred steeds  
135 Groom'd sleek, ear-active, eating corn and hay.'

'What means this concourse, thinkst thou, Ferragon!'

'I know not if it be not that a host  
Resorting, it may be, to games or fair  
At Tara or at Taltin, rest to-night

140 In the great guest-house. 'Twill be heavier cost  
Of blows and blood to win it than it seem'd.'

'A guest-house, whether many within or few,  
It is the travellers' temple, and esteemed  
In every civil land a sanctuary.

145 'Twere woe to sack the inn,' said Lomna Druth,

'Lomna,' said Ingeel, 'when we swore our oaths  
We made not reservation of the inn;

And, for their numbers, fear not, Ferragon,  
The more, the more the spoil. Say on, and tell.

150 What heard'st thou?'

'Through the open doors I heard  
A hum as of a crowd of feasting men.

Princely the murmurs, as when voices strong

Of far-berd-captains on the front or war  
Sink low and sweet in company of queens.

‘What think’st thou, Ferragon?’

‘The gentlest speech  
Within doors gives the loudest cheer afield.

‘Methinks to spoil this house will try our strength.’

‘And it shall try us and our strength shall bear  
That and worse trial. Say, what sawest thou next  
Within the house? Begin from the right hand.’

‘To rightward of the great door in the midst  
A bench I saw, ten warriors sat thereon.

The captain of the ten was thus. His brow  
Thick and high arching o’er a grey clear eye;

A face long-oval, broader-boned above,

A man whose look bespoke adventure past

And days of danger welcome yet to come,

Though saddened somewhat, haply by remembrance

For blood bespilt or broken vows or both.

His mantle green, his brooch and sword hat gold.

‘Wast captain this, conceiv’st thou, Ferragon?’

‘I know him; verily a man of might;

A man of name renown’d in field and hall;

Gormac Goudongas, long the banish’d son

Of Conor son of Neasa. When his sire

Through love of Deirdre broke his guarantees

Pledged to his step-sire, Fergus son of Roy

For Unach’s sons’ safe-conduct, Gormac, he,

Through love of Fergus and through stronger love

Of kingly-plighted honour undefiled,

Abjured his father’s councils and his court,

And in the hostile halls of western Mayo

Spent many a year of heart-corroding care,

And many a man of Ulster, many a man

Of his own kin, in alien service, slew.

If he be there, methinks to-night’s assault

Will leave the stones of some here harnomed.

Said Ingel, ‘I shall know him, when I see

That pale remorseful visage by and by.

And that same brooch and sword-hilt shall be mine.

What of the men?’

‘The nine he sat among

Were men of steadfast locks, that at his word,

So seemed it me, would stay not to inquire

Whose kindred were they he might bid them slay.’

‘Knowest thou, oh friend, the serviceable nine?’

‘I know them also,’ answered Ferragon.

‘Of them ’twas said they never slew a man

For evil deed, and never spared a man

For good deed; but, as ordered, dutious, slew

Or slew not. Shalt thou mine, unless your heads

Be cased in casquets made of adamant?’

Else shall the corpses of many a valiant man

Now present, on Da Derga’s threshold lie.

‘Nine for his man,’ said Ingel. ‘Thou’st not thou

By tongue-drawn dangers and deterrent phrase

Exaggerate, to shake my settled soul

From that which is my right. Say on, what next?’

‘A bench of three: thick-hair’d, and equal-longer

The hair on poll and brow. Black cloaks they wore,

Black their sword-sheaths, their hafted lances black;

Fair men, withal, themselves, and ruddy-brown.’

‘Who these, oh Ferragon?’

‘I know not, I,

Unless, it may be, these be of the Piets

Exiled from Alba, who in Conor’s house

Have shelter; and, if these indeed be they,



Three better out of Alba never came  
Or sturdier to withstand the brunt of blows.

'Blows they shall have,' said Ingcel; 'and their home,  
Rid of their presence well, shall not again  
Have need to doom them to a new exile,  
What further sawest thou?' 320

'On the bench beside  
I saw three slender, three face-shaven men,  
Robed in red mantles and with caps of red.  
No swords had they, nor bore they spear or shield,  
But each man on his knees a bagpipe held 325  
With jewelled chanter flashing as he moved,  
And mouth-piece ready to supply the wind.'

'What pipes these?'  
'These pipes of a truth,  
If so it be that I mistake them not,  
Appear not often in men's halls of glee: 330  
Men of the *Síabs* they are; and I have heard  
When strife fell out in Tara Liachra's hall  
Around Cuchulain and the butchering hands  
Or Fearáirc's move and All, they were there.'

'To-night their pipes shall play as to our ships  
With strains of triumph; or their fingers' ends  
Shall never close the stops of music more,  
So Ingcel; but again said Ferragon, 335

'Men of the *Síabs* they are - to strike at them  
Is striking at a shadow. If 'tis they,  
Shall this assault; for I have also heard  
At the first tuning of their elvish pipes  
Nor crow nor cormorant round all the coasts  
But hastens to partake the flesh of men.' 340

'Flesh ye shall have, of Ingcel's enemies,  
Sáds, faend.

Al fowl that hither flap the wing to-night!  
And music too at table, as it seems.  
What further sawest thou?' 345

'On a broader bench  
Three vast-proportioned warriors, by whose side  
The slender pipes showed as small as wrens. 350  
In their first greyness they; grey-dark their robes,  
Grey-dark their sword, enormous, of an edge  
To shee the hair on water. He who sits  
The midmost of the three grasps with both hands  
A spear of fifty rivets, and so aways 355  
And swings the weapon as a man might think  
The very thing had life, and struggled strong  
To dash itself at breasts of enemies:  
A cauldron at his feet, big as the vat  
Of a king's kitchen; in that vat a pool, 360  
Hidcons to look upon, of aquat back.  
Therein he dips and cools the blade by times.'

'Resolve us who be these three, Ferragon.'

'Not hard to tell; though hard, perchance to hear  
For those who listen, and who now must know  
What foes their fortunes deems them cope withal,  
If this assault be given while these be here.  
These three are Soncha son of Ohol,  
Called "Half the battle" by admiring men; 370  
Duftach, for fierceness named the Addcropp;  
And Govnar son of Lógnech; and the spear  
In hands of Duftach is the famous "lagun"  
Of Keltar son of Utechar, which erst  
A wizard of the Tuth De-Danain brought  
To battle at Moy Fery, and there lost: 375  
[anff] spear

Found after. And these motions of the spear,  
And sudden sallies hard to be restrained,  
Affect to, oit as blood of enemies  
Is ripe for spilling; and a caudron then  
Full of witch brewage needs must be at hand, 365  
To quench it, when the homicidal art  
Is by its blade expected; quench it not,  
It blazes up, even in the holder's hand,  
And through the holder, and the door-planks through,  
Flies forth to sate itself in massacre.

365

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Ours is the massacre it now would make.  
Our blood it reddens for us, have a care  
How ye assault where champions such as these  
Armed with the *long* or *Ker tar* wait within.

'I have a certain blade,' said Ingce, 'here,  
Steel'd by Smith Wayland in a Lochann cave  
Whose temper has not sick'd me, and I mean  
To cut the fool head off this Addescoop,  
And snap his gadding spear across my knee  
Crown, and say what more thou sawest with n.'

'A single warrior on a separate bench  
I saw. Merlins no man was ever born  
So stately built, so perfect of his limbs,  
So hero-like as he. Fair-haired he was  
And yellow bearded, with an eye of blue.  
He sits apart and wears a wistful look,  
As if he missed some friend's companionship.'

Then Ferragon, not waiting question, cried,  
Gods! all the foremost, all the valiantest  
Of Erin's champions, gathered in one place  
For our destruction, are assembled here!  
That man is Conall Carnach, and the friend  
He looks for vainly with a wistful eye

Is great Cuchulain. He no more shall share  
The upper bench with Conall, since the tomb  
Holds him, by hand of Conall self-ave aged  
The foremost this, the mightiest champion this  
Left of the Red Branch, since Cuchulain's fall.  
Look you, as thick as fragments are of ice  
When one night's frost is crackled underfoot,  
As thick as autumn leaves, as blades of grass,  
Shall the opp'd members and the coven hair heads  
Of them that hear me, on y break of day,  
Before Da-Derga's doors, if this assault  
Be given, while Conall Carnach waits within.

'Pity to slay that man,' said Lomna Drui.  
'That is the man who matched at fords of Clane,  
With maimed Megegra, though no word was near,  
Tied up his own right hand, to fight him fair  
A man both mild and valiant, frank and wise,  
A friend to men of music and of song,  
Loved of all women, were there only one  
Such hero in the house, for that one's sake  
Forgo this slaughter.'

'Lomna,' Ingce said,  
'Not without reason do men call me fool;  
And, Ferragon, think not that fear of man  
The bravest ever born on Irish soil  
Shall make me shamed on a race in the breast  
Of one of all who hear us. Spy, say on,  
What further sawest thou?'

'Three brave youths I saw,  
Three brothers, as I judge. Their mantles wide  
Were all of Syrian silk, and need no work  
Of gold on every hem. With ivory combs  
They smoothed the shining rings of their hair'



That spread and rippled to their shoulder-tips,  
 And moved with every motion of their brows.  
 A slender, tender boy beside them slept,  
 His head in one attendant's lap, his feet  
 In lap of other one; and, couched beside,  
 A hound I saw, and heard him "Qvar" called.

440

445

'Whose be these Synan silks shall soon be mine.  
 O Ferragon? and wherefore weep'st thou, say?'

'Alas, too well I know them; and I weep  
 To think that where they are, he must be near,  
 Their father, Conary, himself, the king:  
 And woe it is that he whose infant lips  
 Suck'd the same breast as yours, should now be there.'

450

'What, Conary, the arch-king of the realm  
 Of Enn-hair? Say, sawest thou that a king?'

'I know not if a king, but one I saw  
 Seated apart: before his couch there hung  
 A silver bordered curtain; grey he was,  
 Of aspect mild, benevolent, composed,  
 A cloak he wore of colour like the haze

455

Of a May morning when the sun shines warm  
 On dewy meads and fresh-ploughed tillage land,  
 Various and beautiful, with border broad  
 Of golden woof that glittered to his knee

460

A stream of light before him on the floor  
 A juggler played his reats: nine balls he had,  
 And flung them upward, eight in air at once,  
 And one in hand like swarm of summer bees  
 They danced and circled, till his eye met mine;  
 Then he could watch no more; but down they fell

465

And rolled upon the floor. "An evil eye  
 Has seen me," said the juggler; and the child  
 Who slept beside, awoke, and cried aloud,  
 "Qvar! good dog, lie forth and chase the thieves!"

470

Then judged I longer to remain were ill,  
 But, ere I left, discharged a rapid glance  
 Around the house, beholding many a band  
 Of able guardsmen cosleted and headed,  
 Of captains, carriers, farriers, charoteers,  
 Horseboys and jockeys, all in order set,  
 All good men of their hands, and weapon'd well.

Said Ferragon, 'If my advice were given,  
 "I would be to leave this onset untried."

'Play to slay this king,' said Lotuna Druth  
 'Since he has reigned there has not fallen a year  
 Of dearth, or plague, or murrain on the land;  
 The dew has never left the blades of grass  
 One day of Conary's time, before the noon;  
 Nor harsh wind ruffled hair upon the side  
 Of grazing beast. Since he began his reign,  
 From mid-spring to mid-autumn, cloud nor storm  
 Has dimm'd the daily-shining, bounteous sun;  
 But each good year has seen its harvests three,  
 Of blade, of ear, of fruit, apple and nut.  
 Peace until now in all this realm has reigned,  
 And terror of just laws kept men accure  
 What though, by love constrained, in passion's hour,  
 I joined my fortunes to the desperate fates  
 Of hapless knaves, I repent it now,  
 And wish that rigorous law had had its course  
 Sooner than this good king should now be slain.'

'Not spoken like a brother,' Ingeel said,  
 'Nor one who feels for brothers by the side  
 Of a gray father butchered, as I feel.'  
 'Twas blind chance-medley, and we know them not,  
 For sin of mine,' said Ferragon; 'but he,

This king, is his of ours; and that thou knowest,  
With seasonable warning it were woe  
To slay him.

“Woe it were, perchance, to thee;  
To me, ’twere joy to slay both him and them;  
’Twere blood for blood, and what my soul desires.  
My father was a king; my brethren seven  
Were princely nurtured. Think’st thou I for them  
Feel not compassion? nourish not desire  
Of vengeance? No. I stand upon the paths  
Ye swore me; I demand my spoil for spoil,  
My blood for blood.”

“’Tis just,” said Fergobar,  
“We promised and will make the bargain good.”

“Yet take the spoil we own to be thy right  
Elsewhere,” said Fergogon; “not here nor now.  
We gave thee licence, and we grant it still,  
To take a plunder: look around and choose  
What trading port, what dealers’ burgh ye will,  
We grant, and will help you to the gain.”

“We gave thee licence,” Lomna said,—“and I  
Grieve that we gave it, yea, or took the like,  
To take a plunder; but we gave thee not  
Licence to take the life, the soul itself  
Of our whole nation, as you now would do.  
For, slay our reverend sages of the law,  
Slay him who puts the law they teach in act,  
Slay our sweet poets, and our sacred bards,  
Who keep the continuity of time  
By fame perpetual of renowned deeds;  
Slay our experienced captains who prepare  
The youth for martial manhood, and the charge

Of public freedom, as befits a state  
Self governed, self sufficient, self contained,  
Slay all that minister our softer life,  
Now by this evil chance assembled here,  
You leave us but the carcass of a state,  
A rabble ripe to rot, and yield the land  
To foreign masters and perpetual shame.”

Said Ingcal, “This night’s plunder is my own,  
And paid for. I shall take it here and now.  
I need not Lomna’s airy rhetoric;  
But this I say, and mark it, Fergogon:  
Let him who would turn craven, if he will,  
Take up his stone and go: and take withal  
Contempt of valiant men.”

Said Lomna Druid,  
“He is no craven, Ingcal; nor am I.  
His heart misgives him, not because he fears  
To match himself in manly feat of arms  
With any champion, but because he fears  
To do an impious act, as I too fear.”

I own true,” said Fergogon, “my heart  
Is full of anguish and remorseful love  
Towards him, my sovereign, who did never wrong,  
Save in not meting justice to the full  
Against these violators of his law,  
Who now repay his clemency with death.”

“Call it not clemency,” said Fergobar;  
“He drove us naked from ancestral homes  
To herd with outlaws and with desperate men.”

“Outlaws we are; and so far desperate,”  
Said Ingcal, “that we know to sack this house,  
And for the very reason that he says,



Because the richest jewels, both of men  
And gold, the land affords, are gathered there.

Then Lomna from his mantle took the brooch,  
And said, 'Oh Ingcel, this and whatso else 570  
Of other plunder fallen to my share  
Lies in the ships, I offer Take it all,  
But leave this house unsack'd.'

'Said Ferragon,  
'Take also all my share but spare the king.'

But Ingcel roughly pushed the brooch away, 575  
And said, 'Hays done. The onset shall be given.'

'The onset shall be given, unless the earth  
Open and swallow us,' said Fergobar.

'The onset shall be given, unless the heavens  
Fall round on us!' answered Ger and Gel, 580

'The onset shall be given' replied they all.

Then Lomna,—laying his brooch upon the heap,  
'Who first returns—but I shall not return  
To take his stone again, take also this  
And for the rest of what my sword has gained, 585  
Share it among you. I forgive you all,  
And bid you all farewell; for nothing now  
Remains for me but death,' and with the word  
He struck his dagger in his heart, and fell.

'Kings, lords, and men of war,' said Ferragon, 590  
'Comrades till now, the man whose body lies  
Before us, though we used to call him fool  
Because his heart was softer and his speech  
More delicate than ours, I now esteem  
Both wise and brave, and noble in his death. 595  
He spoke me truly, for he knew my heart,

Unspoken, when he said 'was not through fear  
Of death I spoke dissuading, but through fear  
Of conscience but your hearts I better know  
600 Leaving unspoken what was in my own;  
For well indeed I knew how vain it were  
To talk of pity, love, or tenderness  
To bloody-minded and to desperate men.  
Therefore I told you, and I told you true  
605 What loss to reckon of your wretched lives,  
Entering this dragons' den; but did not tell  
The horror and the anguish sharp as death  
In my own bosom entering as I knew  
The pictured presence of each faithful friend,  
610 And of that sire revered, ye now conarga  
To massacre and bloody butchery  
And that 'twas love that swayed me, and not fear,  
Take this for proof' as I drew and slew himself.  
'Comrades and valiant partners, Ingcel er ed,  
615 'Stand not to pause to wonder or lament'  
These scrupulous companions; rest them well!  
But set your spirits to achieve the end  
That brought us hither. Now that they are gone  
And nothing hinders, are we all agreed  
620 To give this onset bravely and at once?'

'I speak for all,' said Fergobar. 'Agreed!  
Ready we are and willing, and I myself,  
Having my proper venge of vengeance,  
Will lead you and be foremost of you all.'

625 They raised the shout of onset from the seat,  
Leaped Cocht, leaped Cormac, Conal, Carnach leaped,  
And Duftach from the cauldron drew his spear;  
But Conary with countenance serene  
Sat on unmoved. 'We are enough,' he said,

'To hold the house, though three our number came; 530  
 And little think they, whosoever they are,  
 (Grant, gracious ones of Heaven, it be not they)  
 That such a welcome we is them at the hands  
 Of Erin's choicest champions. Door keepers,  
 Stand to your posts, and stalk who enters down! 535

The shout came louder, and at every door  
 At once all round the house, the shock began  
 Of charging hosts and battery of blows;  
 And through the door that fronted Conary's seat  
 A man burst headlong, ceding, in 1 of wounds, 540  
 But dropping midway, smote by the curb of Cecht.

'What, thou? oh Fergobar,' cried Conary,  
 'Say, ere thou diest, that thou art alone—  
 That Ferragon and Lomha whom I love  
 Are not among you?' 545

'King,' said Fergobar,  
 'I die without the vengeance that I vowed.  
 Thou never lovedst me but the love thou gavest  
 My hapless brothers, well have they returned,  
 And both lie outside, slain by their own hands  
 Rather than join in this cause with me.' 550

The gods between us judge,' said Conary.  
 'Cast not his body forth, I loved him once,  
 And burial he shall have, when, by and by,  
 These comrades of his desperate attempt  
 Are chased away.'

But swiftly answered Cecht, 555  
 'King, they bring fire without; and, see, the stream  
 Runs dry before our feet, damm'd off above.'

'Then, truly, lords,' said Conary, 'we may deign  
 To put our swords to much unworthy use.'

660 Cormac Condlongas, take a troop with thee,  
 And chase them from the house; and, strangers, ye  
 Who rode before me without licence asked,  
 I see ye be musicians; take your pipes  
 And sound a royal pibroch, one of you,  
 665 Before the chief'

'Yea, mighty king,' said one,  
 'The strain I play ye shall remember long;  
 And put the mouthpiece to his lips. At once—  
 It seemed as earth and sky were sound alone,  
 And every sound a maddening battle-call,  
 670 So spread desire of fight through breast and brain,  
 And every arm to feat of combat strung.  
 Forth went the rallying hosts: the hosts within  
 Heard the enlarging tumult from their doors  
 Roll outward; and the clash and clamour heard  
 675 Of falling foes before; and, over it,  
 The yelling pibroch; but, anon, the din  
 Grew distant and more distant, and they heard  
 Instead, at every door new onset loud,  
 And cry of 'Fire! Bring fire!'

'Behoves us make 680  
 A champion-circuit of the house at large,'  
 Said Conary. 'Then, Duftach, who, I see,  
 Canst hardly keep the weapon in thy hand  
 From flying on these cariffs of itself,  
 Lead thou, and take two cohorts of the guard,  
 685 And let another pipe play you on.'

'I fear them, these red pipers,' said the boy.  
 'Peace, little Ferlach, thou art but a child,'  
 Said Duftach. 'Come, companions!—patience, spear!—  
 Blow up the pibroch; warriors, follow me!'  
 690 And forth they went, and with them rushed again  
 Senehad and Gowan and the thick hair'd three'



Of Picland with a shout; and all who heard  
 Dreamed that the spear of Keltar shouted too  
 The loudest and the fiercest of them all,  
 So issued Duftach's band; the hosts within  
 Heard the commotion and the hurdling rout  
 Half round the house, and heard the mingling scream  
 Of pipes and death-cries far into the night;  
 But distant and more distant grew the din,  
 And Duftach came not back but thronging back  
 Came the assistants, and at every door  
 Joined simultaneous battle once again.  
 Then Conall Carnath, who, at door and door,  
 Swift as a shuttle from a weaver's hand,  
 Divided help, cried,

'King, our friends are lost  
 Unless another sally succour them!'

'I see then thy troop,' said Conary, 'and that a  
 Red-capped companion, see thou play a strain  
 So loud our comrades straying in the dark  
 May hear and join you.'

'Evil pipes are theirs,  
 Trust not those pipers. I am but a child,'  
 Said Ferfath, 'but I know they are not men  
 Of mankind, and will pipe you all to harm.'

'Peace, little prince,' said Conall. 'Trust in me,  
 I shall but make one circuit of the house,  
 And presently to with thee, come, my men,  
 Grip me the *Brierly Conall*, and my spear,  
 And sound Cash Lin's onset for the breach,'  
 And, as a jet of smoke and flame  
 Bursts from a fish replenished furnace moul'd,  
 He and his cohort sallied: they within  
 Heard the concussion and the spreading shock  
 Through thick opposing legions overthrown,

As, under hatches, men on shipboard hear  
 The dashing and the rumbling waves without.  
 Half round the house; no more clamour and scream  
 Grew fainter in the distance; and the hosts  
 Gazed on each other with magnifying eyes,  
 And reckoned who were left: *alack, but few!*  
 'Gods! I can't be,' said Conary, 'that my chiefs  
 Desert me in this peril!

'King,' said Ceclit,  
 'Escape who will, we here desert thee not.'  
 'Oh, never will I think that Conall fled,'  
 Said Ferfath. 'He is brave and kind and true,  
 And promised me he would return again.  
 It is these wicked sprites of fairy-land  
 Who have beguiled the chiefs away from us'

'Alack,' the druid cried, 'he speaks the truth  
 He has the seer's insight which the gods  
 Vouchsafe to eyes of childhood. We are lost,  
 And for thy fault, O Conary, the gods  
 Have given us over to the spirits who dwell  
 Beneath the earth.'

'Deserted I may be,  
 Not yet disheartened, nor debased in soul,'  
 Said Conary. 'My sons are with me still,  
 And thou, my faithful sidesman, and you all  
 Companions and partakers of my days  
 Of glory and of power manifest,  
 I pray the gods forgiveness if in sight,  
 We ghty or trifling, I have done amiss,  
 But here I stand, and will defend my life,  
 Let come against me power of earth or hell,  
 All but the gods themselves the righteous ones,  
 Whom I revere.'

'My king,' said Cecht, 'the knives

Swarm' thick as gnats at every door again.

Beoves us make a circuit, for ourselves,  
Around the house, for so our fortune stands

That we have left us nothing else to choose  
But, out of doors, to bear them off, or burn  
Within doors; 'for they fire the house anew.'

Then uprose singly Conary himself  
And put his helmet on his sacred head,  
And took his good sharp weapon in his hand,  
And braced himself for battle long delayed.  
Uprose his three good sons, and doff'd their cloaks  
Of Syrian purple, and assumed their arms

Courageously and princely, and uprose  
Huge Cecht at left-hand of the king, and held  
His buckler broad in front. From every side,  
Thinn'd though they were, guardsman and charioteer,  
Steward and butler, cupbearer and groom,

Thronged into martial file, and forth they went  
Right valiantly and royally. The band  
They left behind them, drawing freer breath,—

As sheltering shepherds in a cave who hear  
The rattle and the crash of circling thunder,—  
Heard the king's onset and his hearty cheer,

The tumult, and the sounding strokes of Cecht,  
Three times go round the house, and every time  
Through overthrow of falling enemies,

And all exulted in the kindling hope  
Of victory and rescue, all again

The rallying host returned; all hot they were;  
And Conary in the doorway entering last

Exclaimed, 'A drink, a drink!' and cast himself  
Panting upon his couch.

'Ye cupbearers,'

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Cried Cecht, 'be nimble: fetch the king a drink  
Well has he earned this thirst.' The cupbearers  
Ran hither, thither; every vat they tried,

And every vessel—tinber, silver, gold,

But drink was nowhere found, nor wine nor ale  
Nor water. 'All has gone to quench the fire,  
'There is not left of liquor in the house

One drop; nor runs there water, since the stream  
Was damm'd and turned aside by Ingcel's men,'

Nearer than Tiptad-Casra; and the way  
Flatter is long and rugged, and the foe  
Swarms thick between.

'Who now among you here  
Will issue forth, and fetch your king a drink?'

Said Cecht. One answered,

'Wherefore not thyself?'  
'My place is here,' said Cecht, 'by my king's side:  
His succuman I.'

'Good papa Cecht, a drink,  
A drink, or I am sped!' cried Conary.

'Nay that,' said Cecht, 'it never shall be said

My royal master craved a drink in vain,  
And water in a well, and life in me.  
Swear ye to stand around him while ye live  
And I with but the goblet in one hand,

And this good weapon in the other, will forth  
And fetch him drink—alone, or say, with whom?'

None answered but the little Ferflath; he  
Cried, 'Take me with thee, papa Cecht, take me!'  
Then Cecht took up the boy and set him high

On his left shoulder with the golden cap  
Of Conary in his hand; he raised his shield  
High up for the protection of the child,

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And forth the great door, as a loosened rock  
 (Fly ye, foes all, fly ye before the face  
 Of Cecht, the battle-sidesman of the king")  
 That from a hill-side shoots into a brake, 820  
 Went through and through them with a hunter's bound;  
 And with another, and another, reached  
 The outer rim of darkness, past their ken.  
 Then down he set the lad, and hand in hand,  
 They ran together till they reached the well 825  
 And filled the cup.

"My little son, stay here,"  
 Said Cecht, "and I will carry, if I may,  
 His drink to Conary."

"Oh, papa Cecht,  
 Leave me not here," said Ferflath; "I shall run  
 Beside thee, and shall follow in the lane, 830  
 Thou'lt make me through them."

"Come then," answered Cecht,  
 "Bear thou the cup, and see it spill not: come!"

But ~~was~~ they ran a spear-throw, Ferflath cried,  
 "Ah me, I've stumbled, and the water's spilt."

"Alas," said Cecht, "re-fill, and let me bear," 835

But ere they ran another spear-throw, Cecht  
 Cried, "Woe is me; this ground is all too rough  
 For hope that, running, we shall ever effect  
 Our errand, and the time is deadly short."

Again they filled the cup, and through the dawn 840  
 Slow breaking, with impatient careful steps  
 Hed back their course, Cecht in his troubled mind  
 Revolving how the child might bear his charge  
 Behind him when his turn should come for use  
 Of bow, his hands to clear and keep that lane, 845

When, in the faint light of the growing dawn,  
 Casting his eyes to seaward, lo, the fleet  
 Of Ingel had set sail, and, gazing next  
 Up the dim slope before him, on the ridge  
 850 Between him and Da-Derga's mansion, saw  
 Rise into view a chariot-cavalcade  
 And Connall Carnach in the foremost  
 Behind him Corinac-son of Coner came,  
 And Bufrach bearing now a drooping spear,  
 855 At head of all their salving armament.  
 Wild, pale, and shame-faced were the looks of all,  
 As men who doubted did they dream or wake,  
 Or were they horst to be judged, or besc.  
 "Cecht, we are late," said Connall, "we and thou,  
 860 He needs no more of drink who rides within."

"Is the king here?"

"'Tis here that was the king.  
 We found him smothered under heaps of slain  
 In middle floor."

"Thou, Ferflath, take the cup"  
 And hold it to thy father's lips," said Cecht.

865 The child approached the cup; the dying king  
 Felt the soft touch and smiled, and drew a sigh;  
 And, as they raised him in the chariot, died.

"A gentle and a generous king is gone,"  
 Said Cecht, and wept. "I came to witness all  
 870 Here present, that I did not leave his side  
 But by his own command. But how came ye,  
 Chieftain men and champions of the warlike North,  
 Tutors of old and samplers to our youth  
 In loyalty and duty, how came ye  
 875 To leave your lawful king alone to die?"

880 By all my nation's swearing Gods I swear  
 I do defy them; and appeal to you  
 Beings of goodness perfect, and to Thee,  
 Great unknown Being who hast made them all,  
 Take Ye compassion on the race of men;  
 And for this slavery of *gaysib* and *idib*  
 Send down some emanation of Yourselves  
 To rule and comfort us! And I have heard  
 There come the tidings yet may make us glad  
 Of such a One new born, or soon to be  
 Now, morn'g beside me, that with solemn rites  
 We give the king, at Tara, burial!

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 Now, morn'g beside me, that with solemn rites  
 We give the king, at Tara, burial!

SIR SAMUEL FERGUSON. 1870-86.



# THE KING OF BRENTFORD'S TESTAMENT

THE noble King of Brentford  
Was old and very sick,  
He summon'd his physicians  
To wait upon him quick.  
They stepp'd into their coaches  
And brought them best physick.  
They cram'd their gracious master  
With potion and with pill;  
They leech'd him and they bled him:  
They could not cure his ill.  
'Go fetch,' says he, 'my lawyer,  
I'd better make my will.'  
The monarch's royal mandate  
The lawyer did obey;  
The thought of six-and-eightpence  
D'd make his heart full gay.  
'What is't,' says he, 'your Majesty  
Would wish of me to-day?'  
'The doctors have belabour'd me  
With potion and with pill.  
My hours of life are counted,  
O man of tape and quill!  
Sit down and mend a pen or two,  
I want to make my will.'  
'O'er all the land of Brentford  
I'm lord, and eke of Kew;  
For three per cents and five per cents;  
My debts are but a few;  
And to inherit after me  
I have but children two.

# THE KING OF BRENTFORD'S TESTAMENT 63

'Prince Thomas is my eldest son,  
A sober prince is he,  
And from the day we breach'd him  
Till now he's twenty-three,  
He never caused disquiet  
To his poor Mamma or me.  
'At school they never flogg'd him,  
At college, though not fast,  
Yet his Little-go and Great-go  
He credtably pass'd.  
And made his year's allowance  
For eighteen months to last.  
'He never owed a shilling,  
Went never drunk to bed,  
He has not two dears  
Within his honest head—  
In all respects he differs  
From my second son, Prince Ned.  
'When Tom has half his income  
Laid by at the year's end,  
Poor Ned has not a stiver  
That rightly he may spend,  
But sponges on a tradesman,  
Or borrows from a friend.  
'While Tom his legal studies  
Most soberly pursues,  
Poor Ned must pass his mornings  
A-dawdling with the Mase;  
While Tom frequents his banker,  
Young Ned frequents the Jews.

'Ned drives about in buggies;  
Tom sometimes takes a 'bus;  
Ah, cruel fate, why made you  
My children differ thus?  
Why make of Tom a *dullard*,  
And Ned a *gentle*?'

'You'll cut him with a shilling,  
Isolated the man of wits—  
'I'll leave my wealth,' said Brentford,  
'Sir lawyer, as befits—  
And portion both their fortunes  
Into their several wits.'

'Your Grace knows best,' the lawyer said,  
'On your commands I wait.'  
'Be silent, Sir,' says Brentford,  
'A plague upon your prate  
Come, take your pen and paper,  
And write as I dictate.'

The will as Brentford gave it  
Was writ and signed and closed;  
He bade the lawyer leave him,  
And turn'd him round and dozed,  
And next week in the churchyard  
The good old King reposed.

Tom, dress'd in crape and herbald,  
Of mourners was the chief,  
In his self-adorning  
Poor Edward showed his grief.  
Tom hid his fat white countenance  
In his pocket-handkerchief.

suggested light one-horse vehicles.

Ned's eyes were full of weeping,  
He falter'd in his walk,  
Tom never shed a tear,  
But onwards he did stalk,  
As pompous, black, and solemn  
As any catafalque.

And when the hours of Brentford—  
That gentle King and just—  
With bell and book and candle  
Were duly laid to dust,  
'Now, gentlemen,' says a homey,  
'Let business be discussed.'

'When late our sire beloved  
Was taken suddenly ill,  
Sir lawyer, you attended him  
(I mean to tax your bill)  
And, as you signed and wrote it,  
I prithee read the will.'

The lawyer wiped his spectacles,  
And drew the parchment out,  
And all the Brentford family  
Sat eager round about  
For Ned was somewhat anxious,  
But Tom had ne'er a doubt.

'My son, as I make ready  
To seek my last long home,  
Some cares I had for Neddy,  
But none for thee, my Tom:  
Sobriety and order  
You ne'er departed from.'



## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

'Ned drives about in buggy,  
Tom sometimes takes a 'bus;

Ah, cruel fate, why made you  
My children differ thus?

Why make us Tom a dunder,  
'And Ned a genius?'

'You'll cut him with a shilling,'  
Exclaimed the man of wits:

'I'll leave my wealth,' said Brentford,  
'But as best fits,  
And portion both their fortunes  
Unto their several wits.'

'Your Grace knows best,' the lawyer said,  
'On your commands I wait.'

'Be silent, Sir,' says Brentford,  
A plague upon your plate!

Come, take your pen and paper,  
And write as I dictate.'

The will as Brentford spoke it  
Was signed and signed and closed;  
He bade the lawyer leave him,  
And turned him round and dozed,  
The next week in the churchyard  
The good old King reposed.

Tom, dress'd in crape and hat-band,  
Of mourners was the chief,

In utter self-upbraidings

Poor Edward showed his grief:

Tom had his fat white countenance  
In a pocket-handkerchief of

buggy-nigh one-horse vehicles.

## THE KING OF BRENTFORD'S TESTAMENT 65

Ned's eyes were full of weeping,  
He falter'd in his walk;

Tom never shed a tear,

But onwards he did stalk,

As pompous, black, and solemn  
As any catafalque.

And when the bones of Brentford—

That gentle King and just—

With belt and book and candle

Were duly laid in dust,

'Now, gentlemen,' says Thomas,

'Let business be discussed.'

'Which late our sire beloved'

Was taken deadly ill,

Sir Lawyer, you attended him

(I mean to tax your bill),

And, as you signed and wrote it,

I please read the will.'

The lawyer wiped his spectacles,

And drew the parchment out;

And all the Brentford family

Sat eager round about

Poor Ned was somewhat anxious,

But Tom had ne'er a doubt.

'My son, as I make ready

To seek my last long home,

Some cares I had for Noddy,

But none for thee, my Tom:

Sobriety and order

You ne'er departed from.

## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

'Ned drives about in buggies,  
Tom sometimes takes a 'bus;  
Ah, cruel fate, why made you  
My children differ thus?  
Why make of Tom a dailard,  
And Ned a groom?'

65

'You'll cure him with a shilling,'  
Exclaimed the man of wits;  
'I'll leave my wealth,' said Brentford,  
'Sir lawyer, as best fits;  
And portion both their fortunes  
Unto their several wits.'

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'Your Grace knows best,' the lawyer said,  
'On your commands I wait.'  
'Be silent, Sir,' says Brentford,  
'A plague upon your prate!  
Come, take your pen and paper,  
And write as I dictate.'

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The will as Brentford spoke it  
Was writ and signed and closed;  
He bade the lawyer leave him,  
And turn'd him round and dozed,  
And next week in the churchyard  
The good old Kufy reposed.

80

Tom, dress'd in crape and hatband,  
Of mourners was the chief;  
In bitter self-upbraidings  
Poor Edward showed his grief;  
Tom hid his fat white countenance  
In his pocket-handkerchief.

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buggy] light one-horse vehicle,

## THE KING OF BRENTFORD'S TESTAMENT 65

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He falter'd in his walk,  
Tom never shed a tear,  
But onwards he did stalk,  
As pompous, black, and solemn  
As any catafalque.

95

And when the bones of Brentford  
That gentle King and just—  
With bell and book and candle  
Were duly laid in dust,  
'Now, gentlemen,' says Thomas,  
'Let business be discussed.'

100

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Was taken deadly ill,  
Sir Lawyer, you attended him  
(I mean to tax your bill),  
And, as you signed and wrote it,  
I prithce read the will.'

105

The lawyer wiped his spectacles,  
And drew the parchment out;  
And all the Brentford family  
Sat eager round about;  
Poor Ned was somewhat anxious,  
But Tom had ne'er a doubt.

110

'My son, as I make ready  
To seek my last long home,  
Some cares I had for Neddy,  
But none for thee, my Tom:  
Sobriety and order—  
You ne'er departed from.'

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## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

'Ned drives about in buggies,  
Tom sometimes takes a 'bus ;  
Ah, true! fate, why made you  
My children differ thus?  
Why make of Tom a dillard,  
And Ned a gentler?'

'You'll cut him with a shilling,'  
Exclaimed the man of wits ;  
'I'll leave my wealth,' said Brentford,  
'Sir lawyer, as befits ;  
And portion both their fortunes  
Lose their several wits.'

'Your Grace knows best,' the lawyer said,  
'On your commands I wait.'  
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buggies light one-horse vehicles

## THE KING OF BRENTFORD'S TESTAMENT 65

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He fatter'd in his weak,  
Tom never shed a tear,  
But onwards he did stalk,  
As pompous, black, and solemn  
As any catafalque.

And when the bones of Brentford  
That gentle King and just—  
With bell and book and candle  
Were duly laid in dust,  
'Now, gentlemen,' says Thomas,  
'Let business be discussed.'

'When late our sire beloved  
Was taken deadly ill,  
Sir Lawyer, you attended him  
(I mean to tax your bill) ;  
And, as you signed and wrote it,  
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And drew the parchment out ;  
And all the Brentford family  
Sat eager round about ;  
Poor Ned was somewhat anxious,  
But Tom had ne'er a doubt.

'My son, as I make ready  
To seek my last long home,  
Some cares I had for Neddy,  
But none for thee, my Tom :  
Sobriety and order,  
You ne'er departed from.'

'Ned hath a brilliant genius,  
And thou a plodding brain;  
On thee I think with pleasure,  
On him with doubt and pain.'  
'You see, good Ned,' says Thomas,  
'What he thought about us twain.'

'Though small was your allowance,  
You saved a little store;  
And those who save a little  
Shall get a plenty more  
As the lawyer read the complement,  
Tom's eyes were running o'er.

'The tortoise and the hare, Tom,  
Set out, at each his pace;  
The hare it was the faster,  
The tortoise won the race;  
And since the world's beginning  
Thus ever was the case.

'Ned's genius, blithe and singing,  
Steps gaily o'er the ground;  
As steadily you trudge it,  
He clears it with a bound.  
But shillings have stout legs, Tom,  
And wind that's wondrous sound.

'O'er fruits and flowers slow, Tom,  
You pass with plodding feet,  
You heed not one nor t'other,  
But onwards go your beat,  
While genius stops to loiter  
With all that he may meet;

'And ever as he wanders,  
Will have a pretext fine  
For sleeping in the morning,  
Or loitering to dine,  
Or dozing in the shade,  
Or basking in the shine.

'Your little steady eyes, Tom,  
Though not so bright as those  
That restless round about him  
Your flashing genius throws,  
Are excellently suited  
To look before your nose.

'Thank Heaven, then, for the blinkers  
Is placed before your eyes;  
The stupidest are stead out,  
The witty are not wise,  
Oh, bless your good stupid y,  
It is your dearest prize.

'And though my lands are wide,  
And plenty is my good  
Still better gifts from Nature,  
My Thomas, do you hold—  
A brain that's thick and heavy,  
A heart that's dull and cold.

'Too dull to feel depression,  
Too hard to heed distress,  
Too cold to yield to passion  
Or silly tenderness.  
March on—your road is open  
To wealth, Tom, and success.



'Ned smooth n' extravagant,  
And you an greedy lust;  
'I faint,' says Ned, 'as father  
Is less polite than just.'  
'In you, son Tom I've confidence,  
But Ned I cannot trust.

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'Wherefore my lease and copyholds,  
My lands and tenements,  
My parks, my farms, and orchards,  
My houses and my rents,  
My Dutch stock and my Spanish stock,  
My five and three per cents;

190

'I leave to you, my Thomas,  
'What, am I?' poor Edward said;  
'Well, well I should have spent them  
And Tom's a prudent head.'  
'I leave to you, my Thomas,  
To you in trust for Ned'

195

The wrath and consternation  
What post e'er could trace  
That at this fatal passage  
Came o'er Prince Tom's face,  
The wonder of the company,  
And honest Ned's amazement

200

'Tis surely some mistake'  
Good-natured-y old Ned;  
The lawyer answered gravely,  
'Tis even as I said,  
'Twas thus his gracious Majesty  
Ordain'd on his death-bed

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'See, here the will is witness'd,  
And here his autograph;  
'In truth our father's will is;  
Says Edward, with a laugh;  
'But thou shalt not be a loser, Tom,  
We'll share it half and half.'

215

'Alas! my kind young gentleman,  
This sharing cannot be;  
'Tis written in the testament  
That Brentford spoke to me,  
'I do forbid Prince Ned to give  
Prince Tom a halfpenny.

220

'He hath a store of money,  
But ne'er was known to lend it;  
He never help'd his brother,  
The poor he ne'er befriended;  
He hath no need of property  
Who knows not how to spend it

225

'Poor Edward knows but how to spend,  
And thrifty Tom to hoard,  
Let Thomas be the steward then  
And Edward be the lord,  
And as the honest labourer  
Is worthy his reward,

230

'I pray Prince Ned, my second son,  
And my successor dear,  
To pay to his intendant  
Five hundred pounds a year;  
And to think of his old father,  
And live and make good cheer.'

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240

Such was old Brentford's honest testament,  
 He did devise his monies for the best,  
 And lies in Brentford church in peaceful rest.  
 Prince Edward lived, and money made and spent;  
 But his good site was wrong, it is confess'd, 243  
 To say his son, young Thomas, never lent.  
 He did. Young Thomas lent at interest,  
 And nobly took his twenty-five per cent.

Long time the famous reign of Ned endured  
 O'er Chiswick, Egham, Brentford, Putney, Kew; 250  
 But of extravagance he ne'er was cured,  
 And when both died, as mortal men will do,  
 'Twas commonly reported that the steward  
 Was very much the richer of the two.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, 1811-63.

## THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS

I

You're my friend:  
 I was the man the Duke spoke to;  
 I helped the Duchess to cast off his yoke, too;  
 So, here's the tale from beginning to end,  
 5 My friend.

II

Ours is a great wild country  
 If you climb to our castle's top,  
 I don't see where your eye can stop,  
 For when you've passed the corn-field country,  
 10 Where vineyards leave off, flocks are packed,  
 And sheep-range leads to cattle tract,  
 And cattle tract to open chase,  
 And open chase to the very base  
 Of the mountains, where, at a funeral pace,  
 15 Round about, solemn and slow,  
 One by one, one after one,  
 Up and up the pine-trees go,  
 So, like black priests up, and so  
 Down the other side again  
 20 To another greater, wider country,  
 That's one vast red drear burnt-up plain,  
 Branched through and through with many a vein  
 Whence iron's dug, and copper's dear,  
 Look right, look left, look straight before,—  
 25 Beneath they mine, above they smelt,  
 Copper-ore and iron-ore,  
 And forge and furnace mould and melt,  
 And so on, more and ever more,



Till, at the last, for a bounding belt,  
Comes the salt sand near of the great sea-shore,  
—And the whole is our Duke's country.

## III

I was born the day this present Duke was—  
(And O, says the song, ere I was old.)  
In the house where the other Duke was—  
(When I was happy and young, not old.)  
I in the Kennel, he in the Bower—  
We are of like age to an hour  
My father was Huntsman in that day;  
Who has not heard my father say  
That, when a bear was brought to bay,  
Three times, four times out of five,  
With his huntepear he'd contrive  
To get the killing-place transfixed,  
And pin him true, both eyes be burnt?  
And that's why the old Duke would father  
He lost a seat-pit than my father,  
And loved to have him ever in call;  
That's why my father stood in the hall  
When the old Duke brought his infant out  
To show the people, and while they passed  
The wondrous babbling round about,  
Was first to start at the outside blast  
As the Kaiser's courier blew his horn,  
Just a month after the babe was born.  
'And,' quoth the Kaiser's courier, 'since  
The Duke has got an Heir, our Prince  
Needs the Duke's self at his side.'  
The Duke looked down and seemed to wince,  
But he thought of wars o'er the world wide,  
Castles a-fire, men on their march,

The tapping tower, the crashing arch;  
And up he looked, and awhile he eyed  
The row of crests and shields and banners,  
Of all achievements after all manners,  
65 And 'ay,' said the Duke with a surly pride,  
The more was his comfort when he died.  
At next year's end, in a velvet suit,  
With a gilt glove on his hand, and his foot  
In a silken shoe for a leather boot,  
70 Ferricoated like a herald,  
In a chamber next to an ante-room,  
Where he breathed the breath of page and groom,  
What he called sunk, and they, perfume  
They should have set him on red Berold,  
75 Mad with pride, like fire to manage!  
They should have got his cheek fresh tanned  
Such a day as to-day in the merry sunshine!  
Had they stuck on his fist a rough foot merlin!  
(Hark, the wind's in the heath at its gate!)  
80 Oh for a noble falcon-lanner  
To flap each broad wing like a banner,  
And turn in the wind, and dance like flame.)  
Had they broached a cask of white beer from Berlin  
—Or if you incline to prescribe mere wine  
85 Put to his lips when they saw him pine,  
A cup of our own Moldavia-fine,  
Cotnag, for instance, green as May sorrel,  
And rosy with sweet,—we shall not quarrel.

## IV

So, at home, the sick tall yellow Duchess  
Was left with the infant in her clutches,  
She being the daughter of God knows who.

merlin, falcon-lanner; various species of hawk.

And now was the time to revisit her tribe,  
So, abroad and afar they went, the two,  
And let our people sail and gibe  
At the empty Hall and extinguished fire,  
As loud as we liked, but ever in vain,  
Till after long years we had our desire,  
And back came the Duke and his mother again.

And he came back the pettest little ape  
That ever affronted human shape;  
Full of his wares, struck at himself,  
You'd say, he despised our bluff old ways?  
—Not he! For in Paris they told the elf  
That our rough North land was the Land of Lays,  
The one good thing left in evil days,  
Since the Mid-Age was the *heroic* Time,  
And only in wild nooks like ours  
Could you taste of it yet as in its prime,  
And see true castles, with proper towers,  
Young-haired women, and manly men,  
And manners now as manners were then.  
So, all that the old Duke had been, without knowing it,  
This Duke would fain know he was, without being it,  
'Twas not for the joy's self, but the joy of his showing it,  
Nor for the pride's self, but the pride of our seeing it,  
He revived all usages thoroughly worn-out,  
The joints of them formed forth the scars of them torn out,  
And chief in the chase his neck he perched,  
On a stately horse, all legs and length,  
With blood for bone, all speed, no strength;  
—They should have set him on red Berold,  
With the red eye slow consuming in fire,  
And the thin stiff ear like an abbey spire!

Well, such as he was, he most marry, we heard.  
And out of a convent, at the word,  
Came the Lady, in time of spring  
Oh, old thoughts they cling, they cling!  
That day, I know, with a dozen oaths  
I clad myself in thick hunting-clothes  
For the chase of wren or bulle  
In winter-time when you need no muffle.  
But the Duke had a mind we should cut a figure,  
And so we saw the Lady arrive.  
My friend, I have seen a white crane bigger!  
She was the smallest Lady alive,  
Made, in a piece of Nature's madness,  
Too small, almost, for the life and gladness  
That over-filled her, as some have  
Out of the bears' reach on the high trees  
Is crowded with its safe merry bees:  
In truth, she was not hard to please.  
Up she looked, down she looked, round at the maid,  
Straight at the castle, that's best indeed  
To look at from outside the walls  
As for us, styled the 'serfs and thralls,'  
She as much thanked me as if she had said it,  
(With her eyes, do you understand?)  
Because I patted her horse while I led it;  
And Max, who rode on her other hand,  
Said, no bird flew past but she inquired  
What its true name was, nor ever seemed tired—  
If that was an eagle she saw hover,  
And the green and grey bird on the field was the plover.  
When suddenly appeared the Duke

[wren] wrench, the wild cattle of Europe, now we get  
bulle] buffalo.

And as down she sprung, the small foot pointed  
 Out to my hand,—as with a rebuke,  
 And as if his backbone were not jointed,  
 The Duke stepped rather aside than forward,  
 And welcomed her with his grandest smile;  
 And, mind you, his mother all the while  
 Chilled in the rear, like a wind to Norward!  
 And up, like a weary yawn, with its puller  
 Went in a shuck, the rusty porttullis,  
 And, like a glad-sly the north-wind sullies,  
 The Lady's face stopped us p a y,  
 As if her first hair had grown grey.  
 For such things must begin some one day!

It a day or two she was well again;  
 As who should say, 'You labour in vain!  
 This is all a jest against God, who meant  
 I should ever be, as I am, content  
 And glad in His sight; therefore, glad I will be I'  
 So, smiling as at first went she.

She was active, stirring, all fire—  
 Could not rest, could not tire—  
 So a stone she might have given life!  
 (I loved loved once, in my day)  
 For a Sappho's, Minerva, Hanniball's wife,  
 (I had a wife, I know what I say)  
 Never in all the world such an one!  
 And here was plenty to be done,  
 And she that could do it great or small,  
 She was to do nothing at all  
 There was already this man in this post,

This in his station, and that in his office,  
 And the Duke's plan admitted a wife, at most,  
 To meet his eye, with the other trophies,  
 Now outside the Hall, now in it,  
 To sit thus, stand thus, see and be seen,  
 At the proper place in the proper minute,  
 And die away the life between  
 And it was amusing enough, each infraction  
 Of rule (but for after-sadness that came)  
 To hear the consummate self-satisfaction  
 With which the young Duke and the old Dame  
 Would let her advise, and criticize,  
 And, being a fool, instruct the wise  
 And child like parcel out praise or blame:  
 They bore it all in complacent guise,  
 As though an artificer, after contriving  
 A wheel-work image as if it were living,  
 Should find with delight it would motion to strike  
 him!  
 So found the Duke, and his mother like him.  
 The Lady hardly got a rebuff—  
 That had not been contemptuous enough,  
 With his cursed smirk, as he nodded applause,  
 And kept off the old mother-cat's claws.

So, the little Lady grew silent and thin,  
 Paling and ever paling,  
 As the way is with a bad chagrin;  
 And the Duke perceived that she was ailing,  
 And said in his heart, 'Tis done to spite me,  
 But I shall find in my power to right me!  
 Don't swear, friend—the Old One, many a year,  
 Is in Hell, and the Duke's self . . . you shall hear.



Well, early in autumn, at first winter-warming,  
 When the sun had to break with his foot, of a morning,  
 A drinking-hole out of the fresh tender ice,  
 That covered the pond till the sun, in a trice,  
 Loosening it, let but a ripple of good,  
 And another and another and faster and faster,  
 Till, dipping to blindness, the wide water rolled:  
 Then it so chanced that the Duke our master  
 Asked himself what were the pleasures in season,  
 And found, since the calendar had him be hearty,  
 He should do the Middle Age no treason  
 In seeking on a hunting-party  
 Always provided, old books showed the way of it!  
 What meant old poets by their strictures?  
 And when old poets had said their say of it,  
 How taught old painters in their pictures?  
 We must revert to the proper channels,  
 Workings in tapestry, paintings on panels,  
 And gather up Woodcraft's authentic traditions:  
 Here was food for our various ambitions,  
 As on each side, exactly stated,  
 — To encourage your dog, now, the properest chirrup,  
 O best prayer to St. Hubert on mounting your stirrup,  
 We of the household took thought and debated.  
 Blew'd was he whose back ached with the jerk  
 His are was wont to do forest-work in;  
 Blew'd was he who nobly sunk 'em  
 And 'shs' while he rugged on his grandeur's trunk-horn,  
 Who sign his paws (they had no claws on)  
 Each slouching before and behind like the sealop,  
 And able to serve at sea for a shawl op,  
 Load'd with la quer and lured with treason?  
 shawl op, light open boat

So that the deer now, to make a short rhyme on't.  
 What with our Venerers, Prickers, and Venderers,  
 Might hope for real hunters at length, and not murderers,  
 And oh, the Duke's tailor—he had a hot time on't!

Now you must know, that when the first dizziness  
 Of flap-hats and buff-coats and jack-boots subsided,  
 The Duke put this question, 'The Duke's part provided,  
 Had not the Duchess some share in the business?'  
 For out of the mouth of two or three witnesses  
 Did he establish all fit or unfitnesses  
 And, after much laying of heads together,  
 Somebody's cap got a notable feather  
 By the announcement with proper unction  
 That he had discovered the lady's function,  
 Since ancient authors gave this term,  
 'When long wind a smart and the deer is at siege,  
 Let the dame of the Castle prick forth on p'ter jennet,  
 And with water to wash the hands of her hege  
 In a clean ewer with a fair towel up,  
 Let her prude at the disemboweling.  
 Now, my friend, if you had so little religion  
 As to catch a hawk, some falcon, launce,  
 And thrust her broad wings like a banner  
 Into a coop for a vulgar pigeon;  
 And if day by day, and week by week,  
 You cut her claws, and sealed her eyes,  
 And clipped her wings, and tied her beak,  
 Would it cause you any great surprise  
 If, when you decided to give her an airing,  
 You found she needed a little preparing?

most] note subsided at the death of the deer.  
 at siege] at bay.

—I say, should you be such a curmudgeon,  
 If he clung to the perch, as to take it in dudgeon?  
 Yet when the Duke to his lady signified,  
 280 Just a day before, as he judged most signified,  
 In what a pleasure he was to participate,—  
 And, instead of leaping wide in flashes,  
 Her eyes just lifted over long lashes,  
 As if pressed by fatigue even he could not dissipate,  
 285 And daily acknowledged the Duke's forethought,  
 But spoke of her health, if her health were worth aught,  
 Of the weight by day and the watch by night,  
 And much wrong now that used to be right,  
 So, shaking and nodded the humming,—  
 290 Was conduct ever more affronting?  
 With all the ceremony settled—  
 With the towel ready, and the sewer  
 Polishing up his Admet swan,  
 And the jennet pitched upon, a piebald,  
 295 Back-barred, crease-coated and pink eye-ball'd,—  
 No wonder if the Duke was nettled  
 And when she persisted nevertheless,—  
 Well, I suppose here's the time to confess  
 That there was had round our Lady's chamber  
 300 A balcony none of the hardest to climb;  
 And that Jacynth the tire-woman, ready in waiting,  
 Stayed in call outside, what need of stating  
 And since Jacynth was like a June rose, why, a fervent  
 305 Anger of Jacynth, of course, was poor servant,  
 And if she had the hub to peep through the casement,  
 How could I keep at any vast distance?  
 And so, as I say, on the Lady's persistence,  
 The Duke, dumb-stricken with amazement,  
 310 stood for a while in a sultry smother,  
 tire-woman waiting-woman.

And then, with a smile that partook of the awful,  
 Turned her over to his yellow mother  
 To learn what was decorous and lawful;  
 And the mother smelt blood with a cat-like instinct,  
 315 As her cheek quick whirled thro' all its quince tract,  
 Oh, but the Lady heard the whole truth at once  
 What meant she? Who was she? Her duty and station,  
 The wisdom of age and the folly of youth, at once,  
 Its detest, regard and its fitting relation—  
 320 In brief, my friend, set all the devils up-belt free  
 And turn them out to carouse in a befriv,  
 And treat the priests to a fifty-part canon,  
 And then you may guess how that tongue of hers ran on!  
 Well, somehow or other it ended at last.  
 325 And, looking her whiskers out she passed,  
 And after her,—making (he hoped) a face  
 Like Emperor Nero or like an Saladin  
 Skulked the Duke's self with the austere grace  
 Of ancient hero or modern paladin,  
 330 From door to staircase—oh, such a solemn  
 Unbending of the vertebral column!

## XII

However, at sunrise our company mastered,  
 And here was the huntama bidding unkenel,  
 And there 'neath his banner the priker blistereel,  
 335 With feather dark as a bough of war fennel,  
 For the court-yard's four walls were filled with fog,  
 You might cut as an axe chops a log  
 Like so much wood for our and balkings;  
 And out rode the Duke in a perfect sulkiness,  
 340 Since, before breakfast, a man feels but queasily,  
 And a waking at the lower abdomen  
 Begins the day with indifferent omen.

And lo, as he looked around uneasily,  
The sun ploughed the fog up and drove it asunder  
This way and that from the valley under,  
And, looking through the court-yard arch,  
Down in the valley, what should meet him  
But a troop of Gipsies—  
No doubt with the annual gifts to greet him.

A. P.

Now, in your hand, Gipsies reach you, only  
After reaching all lands beside;  
North they go, south they go, trooping or lonely,  
And still, as they travel far and wide,  
Caveh they find keep now a trace here, a trace there,  
That puts you in mind of a place here, a place there.  
But with us, I believe they rise out of the ground,  
And we are the food they are found on.  
We are the earth that yet so freely imbrowns;  
Born, no doubt, like insects which breed on  
The very earth they are meant to feed on.  
For the earth is not a use to which they don't turn,  
The one that grows in the mountain's womb,  
Or the sand in the pits like a honeycomb,  
They sift and soften it, bake it and burn it—  
Whether they weld you, for instance, a snaffle  
With side bars never a brute can gaffle,  
Or a lock that's a puzzle of wards within wards,  
Or if your colt's for a harness to curve inwards  
How does devil summer which turn in a wheel  
A won't show the hoof to shrieve.  
Then they can beds like the shell of the winkle,  
Then keep a stout heart in the rain with their tinkle,  
But the sand—they pinch and pound like oysters,  
Command me to Gipsy glass-makers and gotters.

Glasses they'll blow you, crystal-clear,  
Where just a faint cloud of rose shall appear,  
As if in pure water you dropped and let d're  
A bruis-black-blooded mulberry;  
And that other sort, their crowning pride,  
With long white threads distinct made,  
Like the lake-flower's fibrous roots which dangle  
Loose and length and never tangle,  
Where the bold sword-dy cuts the clear waters,  
And the sup-ly comes with all the white daughters:  
Such are the works they put their hand to,  
And the uses they turn and twist iron and sand to.  
And these made the troop, which our Duke saw sally  
Towards his castle from out of the valley,  
Men and women, like new-hatched spiders,  
Come out with the morning to greet our riders,  
And as they wound till they reached the ditch,  
Whereat all stopped save one, a witch,  
That I knew, as she hobbled from the gate up,  
By her gait, directly, and her stoop,  
I, whom Jacynth was used to importune  
To let that same witch tell us our fortunes,  
The oldest Gipsy then above-ground,  
And, so sure as the autumn season came round,  
She paid us a visit for profit or pleasure,  
And every time, as she swore, for the last time.  
And presently she was seen to  
Up to the Duke till she touched his bride,  
So that the horse of a sudden reared up  
As under its nose the old witch peered up.  
With her worn-out eyes, or rather eye-holes  
Of no use now but to gather brine,  
And began a kind of level whine  
Such as they used to sing to their viol.



When their duties they go grudging  
 Up and down with nobody minding :  
 And, then as of old, at the end of the humming  
 Her usual presents went forthcoming  
 A dog-whistle blowing the fiercest of trebles,  
 Just a sea-shore stone holding a dozen fine pebbles,  
 Or a porcelain mouth-piece to screw on a pipe-end,—  
 And so she awaited her annual stipend.  
 But this time the Duke would scarcely vouchsafe  
 A word in reply ; and in vain she felt  
 With twitching fingers at her belt  
 For the purse of black pine-martin pelt,  
 Ready to put what he gave in her pouch safe,—  
 Till, either to quicken his apprehension,  
 Or possibly with an after-intention,  
 She was come, she said, to pay her duty  
 To the new Duchess, the youthful beauty.  
 No sooner had she named his Lady,  
 Than a shunt lit up the face so shady,  
 And his smile returned with a novel meaning—  
 For it struck him, the babe just wanted weaning ;  
 If one gave her a taste of what life was and sorrow,  
 She, foolish to-day, would be wiser to-morrow ;  
 And who so fit a teacher of trouble  
 As this would-be spouse bent weal-nigh double ?  
 So, glancing at her wolf-skin vesture,  
 (If such it was, for they grow so hirsute  
 That their own flesh serves for natural fur-suit)  
 He was contrasting twas pain from his gesture,  
 The hue of the Lady so flower-like and delicate  
 With the loathsome equal of this reclat.  
 In brief, was the man the Duke beckoned  
 From out of the throng, and while I drew near  
 belated bell-rat

He told the crone, as I since have reckoned  
 By the way he bent and spoke into her ear  
 With circumspection and mystery,  
 The main of the Lady's history,  
 Her forwardness and ingratitude ;  
 And for all the crone's submissive attitude  
 I could see round her mouth the loose parts tightening,  
 And her brow with ascending intelligence brg' tering.  
 As though, she engaged with hearty good-will  
 Whatever he now might enjoin to fulfil.  
 And promised the Lady a thorough frig' tering.  
 And so, just giving her a glimpse  
 Of a purse, with the air of a man who mips  
 The wing of the hawk that shall fetch the barnshaw,  
 He bade me take the Gipsy mother  
 And set her telling some story or other  
 Of hill or dale, oak wood or fernshaw,  
 To while away a weary hour  
 For the Lady left alone in her bower,  
 Whose mind and body craved exertion  
 And yet shrink from all better diversion.

x-v

Then clapping heel to his horse, the mere curator,  
 Out rode the Duke, and after his h-l-o  
 Horses and hounds swept, hunt-men and currier,  
 And back I turned and bade the crone follow.  
 And what makes me confident what 's to be told you  
 Had all along been of this crone's devising,  
 Is, that, on looking round sharply, behind you,  
 There was a novelty quick as surprising.  
 For first, she had shot up a full head in stature,  
 And her step kept pace with mine nor faltered,  
 [traps] engrafs feather in the wing of a bird,      barnshaw, young  
 barn,      fernshaw] thicker of fern.

As if age had foregone its usurpature,  
 And the ignoble men was wholly altered,  
 And the face looked quite of a other nature,  
 And the change reached too, whatever the change meant,  
 Her shaggy wolf-skin cloak's arrangement :  
 For where the tatters hung loose like sedges,  
 And ears were glittering on the edges,  
 Like the band-rill strung with romances  
 Which perves the veil a Persian woman's ;  
 And under her brow, like a man's burns newly  
 Come-out as after the rain he paces,  
 Two and striking eye-points duly  
 Lave and avert looked out of their places  
 So, we went and found Jacynth at the entry  
 Of the Lady's chamber standing sentry,  
 I told the command and produced my companion,  
 And Jacynth rejoiced to admit any one,  
 For since last night, by the secret token,  
 No single word had the Lady spoken :  
 They went in both to the presence together  
 While I in the balcony watched the weather.

xv

And now, what took place at the very first of all,  
 I cannot tell, as I never could learn it  
 Jacynth constantly wished a bare to fall  
 On the little head of hers and burn it,  
 If she knew how she came to drop so soundly  
 Asleep of a sudden and there continue  
 The whole time weeping as profoundly  
 As one of the doers my father would pin you  
 "I was the eyes where the life holds garison,  
 — Jacynth forgive me the comparison !

omans good cans.

But where I begin my own narration  
 Is a little after I took my station  
 To breathe the fresh air from the balcony,  
 And, having in those days a falcon eye,  
 To follow the hunt thro' the open country,  
 From where the bushes thinner crested  
 The hillocks, to a plain where 't not one tree.  
 When, in a moment, my ear was arrested  
 By—was it singing, or was it saying,  
 Or a strange musical instrument playing  
 In the chamber? and I to be certain  
 I pushed the lattice, pulled the curtain,  
 And there lay Jacynth asleep,  
 Yet as if a watch she tried to keep,  
 In a rosy sleep along the floor  
 With her head against the door;  
 While in the midst, on the seat of state,  
 Was a queen—the Gipsy woman late,  
 With head and face downbent  
 On the Lady's head and face intent  
 For, curled at her feet like a child at ease,  
 The Lady sat between her knees  
 And over them the Lady's clasped hands met,  
 And on those hands her chin was set,  
 And her upturned face met the face of the crone  
 Wherein the eyes had grown and grown  
 As if she could double and quadruple  
 At pleasure the play of either pupil  
 —Very like, by her hands, slow fanning,  
 As up and down like a gor-crow's flappers  
 They moved to measure, or bell clappers,  
 I said, as it blessing, is it banning,  
 Do they applaud you or burlesque you—

gor-crow, carrion-crow.

Those hands and fingers with no flesh on ?  
 But, just as I thought to spring in to the rescue,  
 At once I was stopped by the Lady's expression :  
 For it was like her eyes were drinking  
 540 From the creature's wide pair above unwinking,  
 Life & pure fire received without shrinking,  
 Into the heart and breast whose heavenly  
 Fold you no single drop they were leaving,  
 Life, that filling her, passed redunant,  
 545 Into her very hair, back swerving  
 Over each shoulder, loose and abundant,  
 As her head thrown back showed the white throat curving,  
 And the very tresses shared in the pleasure,  
 Moving to the mystic measure,  
 550 Bounding as the bosom bounded,  
 I stopped short, more and more confounded,  
 As still her cheeks burned and eyes glared,  
 And she listened and she listened  
 When all at once a hand detained me,  
 555 And the selfsame contagion gained me,  
 And I kept time to the wondrous rhyme,  
 Making out words and prose and rhyme,  
 Till it seemed that the music faded  
 Its wings like a task fulfilled, and dropped  
 560 From under the words it first had prepped,  
 And left them midway in the world,  
 And word took word as hand takes hand,  
 I could hear it now, and understand,  
 And when I held the unbroken thread,  
 565 The Gipsy said—

'And so at last we find my tribe,  
 And so I set thee in the midst,  
 And to thee and all of them describe

570 What thou saidst and what thou didst,  
 Our long and terrible journey through,  
 And all thou art ready to say and do  
 In the trials that remain  
 I trace them the vein and the other vein  
 575 That meet on thy brow and part again,  
 Making our rapid and mystic mark,  
 And I bid my people prove and probe  
 Each eye's profound and glorious globe  
 Till they detect the hidden spark  
 580 In those depths so clear and dark,  
 Like the spots that snap and jarst and fle,  
 Carling over the midnight sea,  
 And on that round young cheek of thine  
 I make them recognize the tinge,  
 585 As when of the costly scarlet wine  
 They drip as much as will manage  
 And spread in a thinnest scale afloat  
 One thick gold drop from the olive's chat  
 Over a silver plate whose sheen  
 590 Still thro' the mixture shall be seen.  
 For so I prove thee, to one and all,  
 For when my people open their breast,  
 To see the sign, and hear the call,  
 And take the vow, and stand the test  
 595 Which adds one more child to the rest  
 When the breast is bare and the arms are wide,  
 And the world is left outside.  
 For there is probation to decree,  
 And many and long must the trials be  
 600 Then shalt victoriously endure,  
 If that brow is true and those eyes are sure ;  
 Like a jewel-finder's fierce assay  
 Of the prize he dug from its mountain rock.



Let once the vindicating ray  
 Leap out amid the anxious gloom, 605  
 And steel and fire have done their part  
 And the prize falls on its finder's heart;  
 So, trial after trial past,  
 With thou fall at the very last  
 Breathless, half in trance 610  
 With the thrill of the great deliverance,  
 Into our arms for evermore;  
 And thou shalt know, those arms once curled  
 About thee, what we knew before,  
 How love is the only good in the world. 615  
 Henceforth be loved as heart can love,  
 Or brain devise, or hand approve.  
 Stand up, look below,  
 It is our life at thy feet we throw  
 To step with into light and joy 620  
 Not a power of life but we'll employ  
 To satisfy thy nature's want,  
 Art thou the tree that props the plant,  
 Or the climbing plant that seeks the tree—  
 Canst thou help us, must we help thee? 625  
 If any two creatures grew into one,  
 They would do more than the world has done;  
 Though each apart were never so weak,  
 Yet vainly through the world should ye seek  
 For the knowledge and the might 630  
 Which in each union grew their right:  
 So, to approach, at least, that end,  
 And blend—as much as may be, blend  
 Thee with us or us with thee,  
 As climbing-plant or propping-tree, 635  
 Shall some one deck thee over and down,  
 Up and about, with blossoms and leaves:

Fix his heart's fruit for thy garland-crown,  
 Cling with his soul as the gourd-climber clings,  
 640 Die on thy boughs and disappear  
 While not a leaf of thine is sore?  
 Or is the other fate in store,  
 And art thou fitted to adorn  
 To give thy wondrous self away,  
 645 And take a stronger nature's sway?  
 I foresee, and I could foretell  
 Thy future portion, sure and well—  
 But those passionate eyes speak true, speak true,  
 And let them say what thou shalt do!  
 650 Only, be sure thy daily life,  
 In its peace, or in its strife,  
 Never shall be unobserved;  
 We pursue thy whole career,  
 And hope for it, or doubt, or fear,  
 655 Is, hast thou kept thy path unswerved,  
 We are beside thee, in all thy ways,  
 With our blame, with our praise.  
 Our shame to feel, our pride to show,  
 Glad, angry—but indifferent, no.  
 660 Whether it is thy lot to go,  
 For the good of us all, where the haters meet  
 In the crowded city's horrible street,  
 Or thou step alone through the mass  
 Where never sound yet was  
 665 Save the dry quick snap of the stork's bill,  
 For the air is still, and the water still  
 When the blue breast of the dripping coot,  
 Dives under, and all is mute,  
 So at the last shall come old age,  
 670 Decrepit as nights that stage:  
 How else wouldst thou retire apart

With the hoarded memories of thy heart,  
 And gather all to the very least  
 Of the fragments of life's earlier feast,  
 Let fall through eagerness to find  
 The crowning dainties yet behind?  
 Ponder on the entire Past  
 Laid together thus at last,  
 When the twilight helps to fuse  
 The first fresh, with the faded hues,  
 And the outline of the whole,  
 As round eve's shades their framework roll,  
 Grandly fronts for once thy soul.  
 And then as, 'mid the dark, a gleam  
 Of yet another morning breaks,  
 And like the hand which ends a dream,  
 Death, with the might of his sunbeam  
 Touches the flesh and the soul awakes,  
 Then—

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Ay, then, indeed, something would happen!  
 But what? For here her voice changed like a bird's,  
 There grew most of the music and less of the words;  
 Had Jacynth only seen by me to clip pen  
 To paper and put you down every syllable  
 With those clever clerkly fingers,  
 All that I've forgotten as well as what lingers  
 In this old brain of mine that's but ill able  
 To give you even this poor version  
 Of the speech I spoil, as it were, with stammering  
 More fault of those who had the hammering  
 Of prosody into me and syntax,  
 And did it, not with hobnails but tinnicks!  
 But to return from this excursion,  
 Just, do you mark, when the song was sweetest,  
 The people most deep and the charm completest,

There came, shal I say, a snap—  
 And the charm vanished!  
 And my sense returned, so strangely banished,  
 And, starting as from a nap,  
 I knew the crone was bewitching my lady,  
 With Jacynth asleep; and but one spring made I,  
 Down from the casement, round to the porta.  
 Another minute and I had entered,  
 When the door opened, and more than mortal  
 Stood, with a face where to my mind centred  
 All beauties I ever saw or shall see,  
 The Duchess—I stopped as if struck by palsy.  
 She was so different, happy and beautiful,  
 I felt at once that all was best,  
 And that I had nothing to do, for the rest,  
 But wait her commands, obey and be dutiful  
 Not that, in fact, there was any commanding,  
 I saw the glory of her eye,  
 And the brow's height and the breast's expanding,  
 And I was hers to live or to die.  
 As for finding what she wanted,  
 You know God Almighty granted  
 Such little signs should serve his wondrous creatures  
 To tell one another all their desires,  
 So that each knows what its friend requires,  
 And does its bidding without teachers.  
 I preceded her; the crone  
 Followed silent and alone;  
 I spoke to her, but she merely jabbered  
 In the old style; both her eyes had slack  
 Back to their pits; her stature shrank,  
 In short, the soul in its body sunk  
 Like a blade sent home to its scabbard,  
 We descended, I preceding,

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Crossed the court with nobody heeding;  
 All the world was at the chase,  
 The court-yard like a desert-place,  
 The stable emptied of its small fry;  
 I saddled myself the very palfrey  
 I remember patting while it carried her,  
 The day she arrived and the Duke married her.  
 And, do you know, though it's easy deceiving  
 Oneself in such matters, I can't help believing  
 The Lady had not forgotten it either,  
 And knew the poor day's so much beneath her  
 Would have been only too glad for her service  
 To dance on hot ploughshares like a Turk dervish,  
 But unable to pay proper duty where owing it  
 Was reduced to that pitiful method of showing it.  
 For though the moment I began setting  
 His saddle on my own nag of Berold's begetting,  
 (Not that I meant to be obtrusive)  
 She stopped me, while his rug was shifting,  
 By a single rapid finger's wag,  
 And, with a gesture kind but decisive,  
 And a little shake of the head, refused me,—  
 I say, although she never used me,  
 Yet when she was mounted, the Gypsy behind her,  
 And I ventured to remind her,  
 I suppose with a voice of less steadiness  
 Than usual, for my feeling exceeded me,  
 Something to the effect that I was in readiness  
 Whenever God should please she needed me,—  
 Then, do you know, her face looked down on me  
 With a look that placed a crown on me,  
 And she felt in her bosom,—mark, her bosom—  
 And, as a flower-tree drops its blossom,  
 Dropped me . . . ah, had it been a purse,

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Of silver, my friend, or gold that's worse,  
 Why, you see, as soon as I found myself  
 So understood,—that a true heart so may gain  
 Such a reward,—I should have gone home again,  
 Kissed Jacynth, and soberly drowned myself!  
 It was a little part of hair  
 Such as friends in a convent make  
 To wear, each for the other's sake,—  
 Thus, see, which at my breast I wear,  
 Ever did (rather to Jacynth's grudging),  
 And ever shall, till the Day of Judgement.  
 And then,—and then,—to cut short,—this is all,  
 How are feelings it's not good to foster,  
 I pushed the gate wide, she shook the bridle,  
 And the palfrey bounded,—and so we lost her.

271

When the liquor's out, why clink the samnukin?  
 I did think to describe you the panic in  
 The redoubtable breast of our master the manukin,  
 And what was the pitch of his mother's yellowness,  
 How she turned as a shark to snap the spare-rib  
 Clean off, sailors say, from a pearl-diving Camb,  
 When she heard, what she called, the flight of the feloness  
 —But it seems such child's play.  
 What they said and did with the Lady away!  
 And to dance on, when we've lost the muse,  
 Always made me—and no doubt makes you—sick—  
 Nay, to my mind, the world's face looked so stern  
 As that sweet form disappeared through the passion,  
 She that kept it in constant good humour,  
 It ought to have stopped, there seemed nothing to do more.  
 But the world thought otherwise and went on,  
 And my head's one that its spite was spent on:



Thirty years are fled since this morn'g,  
 And with them all my hero's adorning.  
 Nor did the old Duchess live outright,  
 As I expect or suppress at spite,  
 The natural end of every adier  
 Nor suffered to empty its person quadder.  
 But she an' her son agreed, I take it,  
 That no one should touch on the story to wake it,  
 For the wound in the Duke's pride rankled every,  
 So they made no word and small inquiry—  
 A fresh Gipsy had paid us a visit, I've  
 Named the couple were never inquisitive,  
 But told them they're folks the Duke don't want here,  
 And had them make haste and cross the front  
 brief, the Duchess was gone and the Duke was glad  
 to it,

And the old one was in the young one's stead,  
 And took in her place the household's head,  
 And a blessed one the household had of it  
 And were I not, as a man might say, cautious  
 Here a treach, more than needs on the haissions,  
 I could favour you with a sander touches  
 Of the paint smatches with which the Duchess  
 Hatched the mallowness of her cheek's yellowness  
 (To get on faster, until at last her  
 Cheek grew to be one mass of plaster  
 Of mud and lumps from mere use of ceruse  
 In which she grew from scalp to under  
 Just the object to make you shudder,

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You're my friend—  
 What a thing needst thou is, world without end!  
 How it gives the least and some a stir up

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As if somebody broached you a glorious plot,  
 And poured out, a lovely spark of spirit,  
 Our green Madonna, that outshines a sup,  
 Cotnar as old as the time of the Druids—  
 820 Friendship may make with that mark of of fairs,  
 Each supplies a dry draught by its ins-and-outs  
 Gives your lips a little shake when the rain and  
 doubts  
 Whether to run on or stop short, and guarantees  
 Age is not all made of stark truth and a little tease.  
 825 I have seen my little Lady once more,  
 Jacynth, the Gipsy, Berold, and the rest of it,  
 For to me spoke the Duke as I told you before,  
 I always wanted to make a clean breast of it  
 And now it is made—why, my dear's blood, that went  
 trickle

830 I trickle, but anon, in such madly ebullient,  
 Is pumped up brisk now, through the main ventricle,  
 And generally floats me about the guberts  
 I'll tell you what I intend to do.  
 I must see this fellow his sad life through  
 835 He is the Duke, after all,  
 And I, as he says, but a serf and thrall.  
 My father was born here, and I inherit  
 His name, a chance he born his son with:  
 Could I pay a lump I should prefer it,  
 840 But there's no time to blow up and get done with,  
 So, I must stay till the end of the chapter.  
 For, as to our middle age-manners-adaptor,  
 Be it a thing to be glad on or sorry on,  
 Some day or other, his head in a rickon,  
 845 And breast in a hauberk, his heels he'll kick up,

xxxx] case

\* monomachmet with sword or braver  
 hauberk; long coat of mail

xxxx

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Slain by an onslaught fierce of Niccup.  
 And then, when red deth the sword of our Duke rust,  
 And its leathern sheath let o'ergrown with a blue crust,  
 Then, I shall scrape together my earnings,  
 For, you see, in the churchyard Jaryath reposes,  
 And our children all went the way of the roses:  
 It's a long lane that knows no turnings.  
 One needs but little tackle to travel in;  
 So, just one stout cloak shall I indue  
 And for a staff, what beats the javelin  
 With which his boar my father pinned you!  
 And then, for a purpose you shall hear presently,  
 Taking some Cotnar, a tight plump skinfur,  
 I shall go journeying, whig-burled, pleasantly!  
 Sorrow is vain and despondency sinful.  
 What's a man's age? He must hurry more, that's all;  
 Cram in a day, what his youth took a year to hold.  
 When we mind labour, then only we're too old—  
 What age had Methusalem when he begat Sam?  
 And at last, as its haven some battered ship sees,  
 (Come all the way from the north parts with sperm oil)  
 I hope to get safely out of the turmoil  
 And arrive one day at the land of the Gipsies,  
 And find my Lady, or hear the last news of her  
 From some old thief and son of Lucifer,  
 His forehead chapleted green with wrensey hop,  
 Sunburned all over like an Athiop.  
 And when my Cotnar begins to operate  
 And the tongue of the rogue to run at a proper rate,  
 And ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> skin, tight once, shows each flaccid dent,  
 I shall drop in with—as if by accident.  
 'You never knew then, how it all ended,  
 What fortunes good or bad attended  
 The little Lady your Queen befriended?'  
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 895

—And when that's told me, what's remaining?  
 The world's too hard for my explaining  
 The same wise jargon of matters equine  
 Who still preferred some sun our year-old  
 To the big boned stock of mighty Berold,  
 And, for string Cotnar, drank French weak wine,  
 He also must be such a Lady's accompaniment:  
 Smooth Jacob still robs homely Sam:  
 Now up, now down, the world's one see-saw.  
 —So, I shall find out some snug corner  
 Under a hedge, like Orson the wood-knight,  
 Turn myself round and bid the world good night,  
 And sleep a sound sleep till the trumpet's blowing  
 Wakes me (unless private cheat us hymen,  
 To a world where will be no further throwing  
 Pearls before swine that can't value them. Amen!  
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 915

## DONALD

'Will you hear my story also.  
 Huge Sport, my adventure in plenty!  
 The boys were a band from Oxford,  
 The oldest of whom was twenty  
 The bonny we hli a bonny  
 Was bright with fire and candle,  
 The followed like a merry-go-round  
 Whores of Sport turned the handle.  
 In our eyes and noses—turk-smoke.  
 In our ears a tune from the street,  
 When 'Boiling, boiling', the girls sang,  
 And ready for fresh Glenlye.

bothy] hat or collage.

So, fast capped fast, with a vengeance:  
 Truths, though,—the lads were loyal;  
 'Grease, five years' brace to the bag!  
 Deer, ten hours' stalk of the Royal'

Of boasting, not one bit, boys!

Only there seemed to settle  
 Somehow above your curly heads,  
 Plain through the singing little,

Palpable through the cloud,  
 As each new-puffed Havana  
 Rewarded the teller's well-to-d tale,—  
 This vaunt 'To Sport—Havanna'

'Hush! Lads, shush!  
 Would a man fulfil life's duty!  
 Not to the bodily frame alone  
 Does Sport give strength and beauty

'But character gains in—training?  
 Ay, Sir, and much beside it.  
 You don't sport, more's the pity:  
 You soon would find, if you tried it,  
 Good sportsman means good fellow,  
 Sound-hearted he, to the centre;  
 Your mealy-mouthed mild milkops  
 There's where the rot can enter.

'There's where the dirt will breed,  
 The shabbiness sport would banish.  
 Oh no, Sir, no! In your honouted ease  
 All such objections vanish.

'Tis known how hard you studied,  
 A Double-First—what, the jigger;  
 Give me but half your Latin and Greek,  
 I'll never again touch trigger!

45 'Still, tastes are tastes, allow me I  
 Allow, too, where there's keenness  
 For Sport, there's the likelihood  
 Of a man's displaying meanness!

So, put on my mettle, I interpose  
 50 'Will you hear my story?' quoth I,  
 'Never mind how long since it happened,  
 I sat, as we sit, in a booth;

'With as merry a band of mates, too,  
 Undergrads all on a level.  
 55 (One's a Bishop, one's gone to the Bench,  
 And one's gone—well, to the Devil;

'When, lo, a scratching and tapping  
 In hobbled a ghastly visitor.  
 Listen to just what he told us himself  
 60 No need of our playing inquisitor.

'Do you happen to know in Ross-shire  
 Mount . . . Ben . . . but the name scarce matters  
 Of the naked fact I am sure enough,  
 Though I clothe it in rags and tatters.

65 You may recognize Ben by description;  
 Behold him—a moor's immenseness  
 Up goes the middle mount of a range,  
 Fringed with its fir-wood-sences

Running the edge, its fir-fringe, mild!  
 70 For an edge there is, though narrow;  
 From end to end of the range, a stripe  
 Of path runs straight as an arrow

And the mountaineer who takes that path  
 Saves himself miles of journey  
 75 He has to plod if he crosses the moor  
 Through heather, peat and burns.



But a mountaineer he needs must be,  
 For, look you, right in the middle  
 Projects such Ben—such an end in self—  
 What planted there, is a nodding

82

Since all Ben's brothers like and big  
 Keep rank, set shoulder to shoulder,  
 And only this buckles out must budge  
 Till it seems—to the beholder

From down in the gully,—as if Ben's breast  
 To a sudden spike diminished,  
 Would signify to the boldest foot  
 'All further passage finished!'

85

Yet the mountaineer who sales on  
 And on to the very bending,  
 Discovers, if heart and brain be proof,  
 No necessity ending.

90

Foot up, foot down, to the turn abrupt  
 Having trod, he, there-arriving,  
 Finds—what he *ought* for a point, *was* breadth,  
 A mercy of Nature's contriving.

95

So, he rounds what when 'tis reached, proves straight,  
 From one side gains the other  
 The wet path widens—restime the match,  
 And he feels you, Ben my brother!

100

But Donald—(that name, I hope, will do)—  
 Wrong him if I am doing  
 The tramp of the culant, whistling the while  
 As oh he as our kith's coming

valiant youth or stalwart of any age.

105 He had dared the danger from boyhood up,  
 And now,—when perchance was waiting  
 A lass at the brig below,—'twixt mount  
 And moor would he stand debating?

Moreover this Donald was twenty-five,  
 110 A glory of bone and muscle  
 Did a fiend dispute the right of way,  
 Donald would try a tussle.

Lightsome he marched he out of the broad  
 On to the narrow and narrow,  
 115 A step more, rounding the angular rock,  
 Reached the front straight as an arrow

He stopped it, safe on the ledge he stood,  
 When—whom found he full facing?  
 What fellow in courage and waistness too,  
 120 Had scouted ignoble pacing,

And left low safety to timid mates,  
 And made for the dread dear danger,  
 And gamed the height where—who could guess  
 He would meet with a rival ranger?

125 'Twas a gold-red stag that stood and stared,  
 Gigantic and magnificent,  
 By the wonder—ay, the peril—struck  
 Intelligent and pacific.

For a red deer is no fallow deer  
 Grown cowardly through park-feeding;  
 He batters you like a thunderbolt  
 If you brave his gaunts unheeding

135 I doubt he could hardly perform *valour*  
 Had valour advised discretion:  
 You may walk on a rope, but to turn on a rope  
 No Blandin makes profession.

Yet Donald must tam, would pride permit,  
Though pride ill brooks retreating  
Each eyed each—mate even, reputationless beast—  
Less fearing than admiring.

140

These are moments when quite new sense,  
To meet some need as novel,  
Springs up in the brain: it inspired resource:  
"Nor advance nor retreat but—grovel!"

And slowly surely, never a whit  
Relaxing the steady tension  
Of eye-stare which binds man to beast—  
By an inch and inch declension,

145

Sank Donald sideways down and down  
Till flat, breast up wards, lying  
At his six-foot length, no corpse more still  
"It be cross me! The trick 's worth trying."

150

Minutes were an eternity;  
But a new sense was created  
In the stag's brain too; he resolves! Slow, sure,  
With eye-stare unabated.

155

Feelingly he extends a foot  
Which tastes the way ere it touches  
Earth's solid and just escapes man's soft,  
Nor hold of the same upclutches

160

Till his fellow foot, light as a feather wing's,  
Lends itself no less finely:

So a mother removes a fly from the face  
Of her babe asleep supinely.

And now 'tis the haunch and hind foot's turn  
—That's hard! can the beast quite raise it?

165

Yes, traversing half the prostrate length,  
His foot up does not graze it.

Just one more lift! But Donald, you see,  
Was a sportsman first, man after  
A fancy lightened his caution through,  
He well-nigh broke into laughter.

170

"It were nothing short of a miracle.  
Univalled, unexampled—

75 All sporting feats with this feat matched  
Were down and dead and trampled!"

The last of the legs as tenderly  
Follows the rest—or never  
Or now is the time! His knife to reach  
80 And his right hand loose—how clever!

175

For this can stab up the stomach's soft,  
While the left-hand grasps the pasteron.  
A rise on the elbow, and—now 's the time  
Or never: this turn 's the last turn!

135 I shall dare to place myself by God  
Who stann'd—for he does—each feature  
Of the face thrown up in appeal to Him  
By the agonizing creature

Nay, I hear plain words: "Thy gift brings this!"  
190 Up he sprang, back he staggered,  
Over he fell, and with him our friend  
—At following game no laggard.

190

Yet he was not dead when they picked next day  
From the gulf's depth the wreck of him;  
195 His fall had been stayed by the stag beneath  
Who cushioned and saved the neck of him.

195

pasteron, part of animal's foot between fetlock and hoof.

But the rest of his body—why, the doctors said,  
 Whatever could break was broken;  
 Legs, arms, ribs, all of him looked like a roset  
 In a tumbler of port-wine shaken.

200

'That your life is left you, thank the stag!'  
 Said they when the slow cure ended—  
 They opened the hospital door, and thence  
 Strapped, splined, man fractures mended,

And minor damage left wisely alone,—  
 Like an old shoe clouted and cobbled,  
 Out—what went in: Goliath well-nigh,—  
 Some half of a David hobble.

205

'You must ask an alms from house to house.'  
 Sell the stag's head for a bracket,  
 With its grand twelvetimes—I'd buy it myself—  
 And use the skin for a jacket.

210

He was wiser, made both head and hide  
 His wan penny; hands and knees on,  
 Would manage to crawl—poor wretch—by the roads  
 In the misty stalking-season.

215

And when he discovered a bothy like this,  
 Why, harvest was sure: folk listened.  
 He told his tale to the lovers of Sport:  
 Lips twitched, cheeks glowed, eyes glistened.

220

And when he had come to the close, and spread  
 His spoils for the gazers' wonder,  
 With 'Gentlemen, here's the skull of the stag  
 I was over, thank God, not under!—'

opens the branches of a stag's horn,

225 The company broke out in applause,  
 'By Jingo, a lucky tripple!  
 Have a munch of grouse and a hunk of bread,  
 And a tag, besides, at our tipples!'

And 'There's my pay for your prick!' cried This,  
 230 And mine for your jolly story!  
 Cried That, while 'T'other—but he was drunk—  
 Hiccapped 'A trump, a Tory!'

I hope I gave twice as much as the rest,  
 For, as Homer would say, 'within grates  
 235 Though teeth kept tongue', my whole soul growed  
 'Rightly rewarded,—Ingrate!'

ROBERT BROWNING, 1842-89.



# THE WITCH'S BALLAD

O I hae come from far away,  
 From a warin land far away,  
 A southern land across the sea,  
 W' th sailor-lads about the mast,  
 Merry and canny, and kind to me.

And I hae been to yon town  
 To try my luck in yon town;  
 Nort, and Mysie, Elsie too.  
 Right haw we w're to pass the gate,  
 W' gowden clasps on girdles blue.

Mysie smiled w' m many mouth,  
 Innocent mouth, n many mouth;  
 Elsie wore a scarlet gown,  
 Nort's grey eyes w're nort's grey  
 My Castile comb was like a crown.

We walk'd aforest all up the street,  
 Into the market up the street;  
 Our hair with marigolds was wound,  
 Our bodices with love-knots laced,  
 Our merchandise with tansy bound

Nort had chickens, I had cocks,  
 Gamesome cocks, loud-crowwing cocks;  
 Mysie cacks, and Elsie drapes,—  
 For a wee goat or a pound;  
 We wot nae time we gives and takes.

garnish ] prim. denture. gleel bright sharp.  
 mass, well used in medicine and witchcraft

## THE WITCH'S BALLAD

209

—Last nae time, for well we knew  
 In our sleeves full weel we knew,  
 When the gloaming came that night,  
 Did it not drake, nor hen nor cock  
 Would be found by candle light.  
 And when our chaffering a' was done,  
 All was paid for, sold and done,  
 We drew a glove on each hand,  
 We sweetly cursed, each to each,  
 And dightily danced a sa abant.  
 The market lassies hark'd and laugh'd,  
 Left their gear, and look'd and laugh'd;  
 They made as they would join the game,  
 But soon their mither, wild and wud,  
 With whack and screech they stopp'd the same.  
 Sae loud the tongue & randies grew,  
 The flyin' and the darkn' grew,  
 At all the windows in the place,  
 W' spoons & knives, w' i cordie or aw,  
 Was thrust out every hand and face.  
 And down each stair they throng'd anon,  
 Gentle, scruple, throng'd anon:  
 Souter and tailor, frowsy Nan,  
 The ancient widow young again,  
 Simpering behind her fan.  
 We wot a choice, against their will,  
 Louted, dazed, against their will,  
 The market lassie and her mither,  
 The farmer and his husbandman.  
 Hand in hand dance a thegither

saraband now Spanish dance. wud mau randies  
 viragoes, flyin' scolding. see on ] shrieking. so on  
 cobbler. dotted, mazed

Slow at first, but faster soon,  
Still increasing, wild and fast,  
Hoods and mantles, hats and hose,  
Bladly doff'd and cast away,  
Left them naked, heads and toes.

60

They would have torn us limb from limb,  
Dainty limb from dainty limb;  
But never one of them could win  
Across the line that I had drawn  
With bleeding thumb & widdershyn.

65

But there was Jeff the provost's son,  
Jeff the provost's only son;  
There was Father Auld himself,  
The Lombard free the hostelry,  
And the lawyer Peter Toll.

70

All goggly each we singied out,  
Waied them well, and sangied out,  
And drew them by the left hand in,  
Mysic the ppest, and Espric won  
The Lombard, Norr the law, er carle,  
I mysic the provost's son.

75

Then, with castrip kisses seven  
Three times round with kisses seven,  
Werp'd and woren there spun wa  
Arms and legs and flaming hair,  
Like a whirlwind on the sea.

80

Like a wind that sucks the sea,  
Over and in and on the sea,

a-widdershyn] the wrong way as the ship came E. to W. through N.  
waied] chose.  
castrip] magic

Good sooth it was a mad delight;  
And every man of all the four  
Shut his eyes and laugh'd outright.

85

Laugh'd as long as they had breath,  
Laugh'd while they had sense or bignath,  
And close about as coild a mist  
Of gnats and midges, wasps and flies,  
Like the whirlwind shaft it rist.

90

Drawn up I was right off my feet,  
Into the mist and off my feet,  
And, dancing on cat chimney-top,  
I saw a thousand darling snips  
Keeping time with skip and hop.

95

And on the provost's brave ridge-tie,  
On the provost's grand ridge-tie,  
The Blackmuir first to chastise me  
I saw, I saw that winsome smile,  
The mouth that did my heart beguile,  
And spake the great Word over me,  
In the land beyond the sea.

100

I call'd his name, I call'd aloud,  
Aas! I call'd on him aloud,  
And then he fill'd his hand with stout,  
And threw it towards me in the air  
My mouse flew out, I lost my pow'r!

105

My lusty strength, my power were gone,  
Power was gone, and all was gone.  
He will not let me love him more  
Of bell and whip and horse's tail  
He cares not if I find a store.

cat] rose.

stout] dust.

## WILLIAM BELL SCOTT

But I am proud — he is fierce;  
 I am as proud as he is fierce;  
 I'll turn about and backward go,  
 If I meet again that Blackamoor,  
 And he'll help us then, for he shall know  
 I seek another paramour.

And we'll gang once more to yon town,  
 Wi' better luck to you town,  
 We'll walk in silk and crimsone,  
 And I shall wed the provost's son:  
 My lady of the town I'll be!

For I was born a crown'd king's child,  
 Born and nursed a king's child,  
 King o' a land ayont the sea,  
 Where the Blackamoor kiss'd me first,  
 And taught me art and glamourie.

Each one in her wame shall bide  
 Her wairy mouse, her wairy mouse,  
 Fed on madwort and agrannie,—  
 Wear amber beads between her breasts,  
 And blind-worm's skin about her knee.

The Lomoard shall be Elspie's man,  
 For his gowden husband man,  
 Nor shall take the law for his hand,  
 The priest shall swear another vow:  
 We'll dance again the saraband.

WILLIAM BELL SCOTT, 1812-93.

crimson, crimson  
 wam—] wam,  
 madwort and wilkewort.

ayont] beyond. glamourie] wizardry.  
 madwort and agrannie] herbs used in

## ANDROMEDA

Over the sea, past Crète, on the Syrian shore to the  
 southward,  
 Dwells in the wail-till'd lowland a dark-haired Æthiop  
 people,  
 Skilful with needle and loom, and the arts of the dyer and  
 carver,  
 Skilful, but feeble of heart; for they know not the lords  
 of Olympus;  
 s Lovers of men; neither broad-browed Zeus, nor Pallas  
 Athénè,  
 Teacher of wisdom to heroes, bestower of might in the  
 battle  
 Share nor the cunning of Hèrmes, nor list to the songs of  
 Apollò.  
 Fearing the stars of the sky, and the roll of the blue salt  
 water,  
 Fearing all things that have life in the womb of the seas  
 and the rivers,  
 10 Eating no fish to this day, nor ploughing the main, like  
 the Phœnicians,  
 Manful with black-beaked ships, they abide in a sorrowful  
 region,  
 Vexed with the earthquake, and flame, and the sea floods,  
 scourge of Poseidon,  
 Wrecking the dwellings of men, and the tows of the  
 slow-footed oxen,  
 Drowning the barley and flax, and the hard-earned gold  
 of the harvest,  
 15 Up to the hill side vines, and the pastures skirting the  
 woodland,



Inland the floods came yearly; and after the waters a  
 monster  
 Bred of the slime, like the worms which are bred from the  
 muds of the Nile-bank,  
 Shapeless, a terror to see, and by night it swam out to  
 the seaward,  
 Daily returning to feed with the dawn, and devoured of  
 the fittest,  
 Cattle, and children, and maids, till the terrified people so  
 fled inland.  
 Fastening in sackcloth and ashes they came, both the king  
 and his people,  
 Came to the mountain of oak, to the house of the terrible  
 sea-gods,  
 Hail by the god in the rocks, where of old the world-  
 wide deluge  
 Sank to the inner abyss; and the lake where the fish of  
 the goddess  
 Holy, undying, abide, whom the priests feed daily with  
 as  
 damies.  
 There to the mystical fish, high-throned in her chamber  
 of cedar,  
 Burnt they the fat of the flock; till the flame shone far  
 to the seaward.  
 Three days fasting they prayed: but the fourth day the  
 priestess of the goddess,  
 Coming in spells, cast lots, to discover the crime of the  
 people.  
 All day long they cast, till the house of the monarch was taken, &  
 Cypher, & y of the land, and the faces of all gathered  
 blacker.  
 Then once more they cast, and Cassiopeia was taken,  
 Deep-bosomed wife of the king, whom oft far-seeing  
 Apollo

Watched well-pleased from the welkin, the fairest of  
 Aethiop women;  
 35. Fairest, save only her daughter; for down to the ankle  
 her tresses  
 Rolled, blue-black as the night, ambrosial joy to be-  
 holders.  
 Awful and fair she arose, most like in her coming to Hec-  
 Queen before whom the Immortals arise, as she comes on  
 Olympus.  
 Out of the chamber of gold, which her son Hephaestus  
 has wrought her.  
 40 Such in her stature and eyes, and the broad white light  
 of her forehead,  
 Stately she came from her place, and she spoke in the  
 midst of the people.  
 'Pure are my hands from blood; most pure this heart  
 in my bosom.  
 Yet one fault I remember this day, one word have I  
 spoken;  
 Rashly I spoke on the shore, and I dread lest the sea should  
 have heard it  
 45 Watching my child at her bath, as she plunged in the joy  
 of her girlhood,  
 Fairer I called her in pride than Atergatis, queen of the  
 ocean.  
 Judge ye if this be my sin, for I know none other.' She  
 ended.  
 Wrapping her head in her mantle she stood, and the  
 people were silent.  
 Answered the dark-browed priestess, 'Neatward, once  
 spoken, returneth,  
 50 Even if uttered unwitting. Shall gods excuse our rash-  
 ness?

welkin} sky.

That which is gone, that abides; and the wrath of the  
 sea is against us.  
 Here, and the wrath of her brother, the Sun-god, lord of  
 the sheepfolds.  
 Fairer than her hast thou boasted thy daughter? Ah  
 truly! for hateful  
 Hateful are they to the gods, whose, impious, liken a  
 mortal,  
 Fair though he be, to their glory; and hateful is that 55  
 which is likened,  
 Grieving the eyes of their pride, and abominable, doomed  
 to their anger.  
 What shall be likened to gods? The unknown, who  
 deep is the darkness.  
 Ever abide, twyformed, many-handed, terrible, shape-  
 less,  
 Woe to the queen, for the land is defiled, and the people  
 accursed,  
 Take thou her there ere by night, thou all-starred Cas- 60  
 siopora,  
 Take her with us on the night, when the moon sinks  
 low to the westward,  
 Bind her aloft for a victim, a prey for the gorge of the  
 ever-hater,  
 Fast on the sea-girt rock, which is washed by the surges  
 for ever,  
 So may the goddess accept her and so may the land make  
 atonement,  
 Purg'd by her blood from its sin: so obey thou the doom 65  
 of THE FATES.  
 Bitter in soul they went out, Cepheus and Cassio-  
 poria,  
 Bitter in soul, and their hearts whirled round, as the  
 leaves in the eddy.

Weak was the queen, and rebelled; but the king, like a  
 shepherd of people,  
 Willed not the land should waste; so he yielded the life  
 of his daughter.  
 70 Deep in the wane of the night, as the moon sank low  
 to the westward,  
 They by the shade of the cliffs, with the horror of dark-  
 ness around them,  
 Stole, as ashamed, to a deed which became not the light  
 of the sunshine,  
 Slowly, the priest, and the queen, and the virgin bound  
 in the galley,  
 Slowly they rowed to the rocks, but Cepheus far in the place  
 75 bace in the midst of the hall on his throne, like a shepherd  
 of people,  
 Choking his woe, dry-eyed, while the slaves wailed loudly  
 around him,  
 They on the sea-girt rock, which is washed by the surges  
 for ever,  
 Set her in silence, the guiltless, aloft with her face to the  
 eastward  
 Under a crag of the stone, where a ledge sloped down to  
 the water;  
 80 There they set Andromeda, most beautiful, shaped like  
 a goddess,  
 Lifting her long white arms wide-spread to the walls of  
 the basalt,  
 Chaining them, ruthlessly, with brass; and they called on  
 the might of the Rulers  
 'Mystical fish of the seas, dread Queen wings Actæon's  
 honour,  
 Whelming the land in thy wrath, unavoidable, sharp as  
 the sting-ray,  
 sting-ray! sea-scorpia.

Thou, and thy brother the Sun, brain-smiting, lord of the  
 sheepfold,  
 Scorching the earth all day, and then resting at night in  
 thy bosom,  
 Take ye this one life for many, appeared by the blood of  
 a maiden,  
 Fairest, and born of the fairest, a queen, most priceless of  
 all things.

Thence they spat as they went by the maid but her  
 mother delaying  
 Fondled her child to the last, heart-crushed; and the so  
 warmth of her weeping  
 Fell on the breast of the maid, as woe broke forth into  
 wailing  
 'Daughter my daughter forgive me! O curse not  
 the murderer! Curse not!  
 How have I sinned, but in love? Do the gods gudge  
 glory to mothers?  
 Loving I bore thee in vain in the fate-cursed bride-bed  
 of Cephæus,  
 Loving I fed thee and tended and loving rejoiced in thy  
 beauty,  
 Blessing thy limbs as I bathed them, and blessing thy  
 locks as I combed them.  
 Decking thee, ripening to woman, I blest thee: yet  
 Lusting I slew thee!  
 How have I sinned, but in love? O swear to me, swear  
 to thy mother,  
 Never to haunt me with curse, as I go to the grave in my  
 sorrow,  
 Childless and lone may the gods never send me another, so  
 to slay it!  
 See, I embrace thy knees—soft knees, where no babe will  
 be fondled—

Swear to me never to curse me, the hapless one, not in  
 the death-pang.  
 Weeping she clung to the knees of the maid; and the  
 maid low answered—  
 'Curse thee! Not in the death-pang!' The heart of  
 the lady was lightened.  
 105 Slowly she went by the ledge; and the maid was alone  
 in the darkness.  
 Watching the pulse of the oars die down, as her own  
 died with them,  
 Tearless, dumb with amaze she stood, as a storm-stunned  
 nestling  
 Fallen from bough or from eaves, as dumb, which the  
 home-going herdsman  
 Fancies a stone, till he catches the light of its terrified  
 eyeball  
 So through the long long hours the maid stood helpless  
 and hopeless,  
 Wide-eyed, downward gazing in vain at the black blank  
 darkness.  
 Feebly at last she began, while wild thoughts bubbled  
 within her—  
 'Guiltless I am: why thus then? Are gods more ruth-  
 less than mortals?  
 Have they no mercy for youth! no love for the souls  
 who have loved them?  
 115 Even as I loved thee, dread sea, as I played by thy  
 margin,  
 Blessing thy wave as it cooled me, thy wind as it breathed  
 on my forehead,  
 Bowing my head to thy tempest, and opening my heart  
 to thy children,  
 Silvery fish, wreathed shell, and the strange lithe things  
 of the water,



Tenderly casting them back, as they gasped on the beach  
 in the sunshine,  
 Horses to their mother—in vain! for mine sits childless 120  
 in anguish!  
 Oh dread sea! false sea. I dreamed what I dreamed of  
 thy goodness.  
 Dreamed of a smile in thy gleam, of a laugh in the splash  
 of thy ripple  
 False and devouring thou art, and the great world dark  
 and despitel!

Awed by her own rash words she was still. and her  
 eyes to the seaward  
 Looked for an answer of wrath, far off, in the heart of 125  
 the darkness;  
 Bright white mist rose slowly; beneath them the  
 wandering green  
 Glimmered and glowed to the deepest abyss; and the  
 knees of the maiden  
 Trembled and sank in her fear, as star, like a dawn in  
 the midnight,  
 Rose from the seaweed chamber the choir of the mys-  
 tical sea-maids.

Onward toward her they came, and her heart beat loud at 130  
 their coming,  
 Warming the bass of the gods, as they awakened the cliffs  
 with their laughter.  
 Onward they came in their joy, and before them the roll  
 of the surges  
 sank, as the breeze sank dead, into smooth green foam-  
 floored marble,  
 Awed, and the crags of the cliff, and the pines of the  
 mountain were silent.

Onward they came in their joy, and around them the 135  
 leaps of the sea nymphs,

Myriad fiery globes, swam panning and heaving; and  
 rainbows  
 Crimson and azure and amethyst, were broken in star-  
 showers, lighting  
 Far through the wine-dark depths of the crystal, the  
 gardens of Nereus,  
 Coral and sea fan and tangle, the blooms and the palms  
 of the ocean.

40 Onward they came in their joy, more white than the  
 foam which they scattered,  
 Laughing and singing, and tossing and turning with  
 eager, the Tritons  
 Landed with kisses their eyes, unreprieved, and above  
 them in worship  
 Hovered the terns, and the seagulls swept past them on  
 silvery pinions  
 Echoing softly their laughter; around them the wanton-  
 ing dolphins

145 Sighed as they plunged, full of love; and the great sea-  
 horses which bore them  
 Curved up their crests in their pride to the delicate arms  
 of the maidens,  
 Pawing the spray into gems, all a fiery rainfall, un-  
 harming,  
 Sparkled and gleamed on the limbs of the nymphs, and  
 the eels of the merman.

Onward they went in their joy, bathed round with  
 the fiery anolness,

150 Netting not sun nor moon, self-lighted, immortal but  
 others,  
 Piteous, floated in silence apart; in their bosoms the sea-  
 boys,  
 Slain by the wrath of the sea, swept down by the anger  
 of Nereus;

Hapless, whom never again on strand or on quay shall  
 their mothers  
 Welcome with garlands and vows to the temple, but  
 wearily pining  
 Gaze over island and bay for the sails of the sunken; 155  
 they heedless  
 Sleep in soft bosoms for ever, and dream of the surge  
 and the sea-maid.  
 Onward they past in their joy; on their brows neither  
 sorrow nor anger;  
 Self-sufficing, as gods, never heeding the woe of the  
 maiden.  
 She would have shrieked for their mercy but shame  
 made her dumb; and their eyeballs  
 Stared on her careless and still, like the eyes in the house 160  
 of the idols.  
 Seeing they saw not, and passed, like a dream, on the  
 murmuring ripple.  
 Stunned by the wonder she gazed, wide-eyed, as the  
 glory departed.  
 "Oh fair shapes! far fairer than I! Too fair to be  
 ruthless!"  
 Gladden mine eyes once more with your splendour,  
 unlike to my fancies;  
 You, then, smiled in the sea-gleam, and laughed in the 165  
 play of the ripple.  
 Awful I deemed you and formless; inhuman, monstrous  
 as gods;  
 Lo, when ye came, ye were women, more loving and  
 lovelier, only,  
 Like in all else; and I blest you why blest ye not me  
 for my worship?  
 Had you no mercy for me, thus guiltless? Ye pitied the  
 sea-boys,

170 Why not me, then, more hapless by far? Does your  
 sight and your knowledge  
 End with the marge of the waves? Is the world which  
 ye dwell in not our world?

Over the mountain a soft rarasush and a roll and a rowing;  
 Downward the breeze came indignant, and leapt with  
 a howl to the water,  
 Roaring in cranny and crag, till the pillars and clefts of  
 the basalt  
 175 Rang like a god-swept lyre, and her brain grew mad  
 with the noise;  
 Crashing and lapping of waters, and sighing and tossing  
 of weed-beds,  
 Gurgling and whisper and hiss of the foam, while thunder-  
 ing surges  
 Boomed in the wave-worn halls, as they champed at the  
 roots of the mountain.  
 Hour after hour in the darkness the wind rushed fiercer  
 to the landward,  
 180 Drenching the mountains with spray; she shivering, weary  
 and drooping,  
 Stood with her heart full of thoughts, till the foamcrests  
 gleamed in the twilight,  
 Leaping and laughing around, and the east grew red with  
 the dawning.  
 Then on the ridge of the hills rose the broad bright  
 sun in his glory,  
 Flung his arrows abroad on the glittering crests of the  
 surges,  
 185 Gilding the soft round bosoms of wood, and the downs  
 of the coastland,  
 Gilding the weeds at her feet, and the foam-laced teeth  
 of the ledges,

Showing the maiden her home through the veil of her  
 locks, as they floated  
 Glistening, dapp with the spray, in a long black cloud  
 to the landward.  
 High in the far-off glens rose thin blue curls from the  
 homesteads,  
 Softly the low of the herds, and the pipe of the out- 190  
 going herdsman,  
 Shd to her ear on the water, and melted her heart into  
 weeping.  
 Shuddering, she tried to forget them; and straining her  
 eyes to the seaward,  
 Watched for her doom, as she wailed, but in vain, to  
 the terrible Sun god.  
 'Dost thou not pity me, Sun, though thy wild dark  
 sister be ruthless,  
 Dost thou not pity me here, as thou seest me desolate, 195  
 weary,  
 Sickened with shame and despair, like a kid torn young  
 from its mother?  
 'What if my beauty insult thee, then blight it: but me  
 —Oh spare me!  
 Spare me yet, ere he be here, fierce, tearing, unbearable!  
 See me,  
 See me, how tender and soft, and thus helpless! See  
 how I shudder,  
 Fearing only my doom. Wilt thou shute thus bright, too  
 when it takes me?  
 Art there no deaths save this, great Sun? No fiery  
 arrow,  
 Lightning, or deep-mouthed wave? Why this? What  
 music in shrieking,  
 Pleasure in warm live limbs torn slowly? And dar'st  
 thou behold them.

Oh, thou hast watched with the clouds, Art thou not  
 to thy brig them!  
 200 What if thou waken the birds to make some of our  
 waken no sorrow:  
 Waken no sick to their pain; no captive to witness  
 his fetters?  
 Smile on the garden and fold, and on meadows where  
 at the milking,  
 Flash into tapestried chambers, and peep in the  
 of lovers,  
 Showing the blissful their bliss—Dost thou, &c., &c.,  
 place where thou smilest?  
 205 Lovest thou cities aflame, fierce blows, and the  
 of the widow?  
 Lovest thou corpse-strawed fields, as thou lightest the  
 path of the vulture?  
 Lovest thou those, that thou gazest so gay on my  
 and my mother's?  
 Laughing alike at the horror of one, and the bliss of  
 another?  
 What dost thou care, in thy sky, for the joys and the  
 sorrows of mortals?  
 210 Colder art thou than the symphs: in thy broad bright  
 eye is no seeing  
 Hadst thou a soul—as much soul as the slaves in the  
 house of my father,  
 Wouldst thou not save! Poor thralls! they pined me,  
 clung to me weeping,  
 Kissing my hands and my feet—What, art thou more  
 ruthless than mortals?  
 Worse than the souls which they rule? Let me die:  
 they war not with ashes!  
 215 Sudden she ceased, with a shriek: in the spray, like  
 a hovering foam-bow,



Hung, more fair than the foam-bow, a boy in the bloom  
 of his manhood,  
 Golden-haired, ivory-limbed, ambrosial, over his shoulder  
 Hung for a veil of his beauty the gold-fringed folds of  
 the goat-skin,  
 Bearing the brass of his shield, as the sun flashed clear  
 on its clearness.  
 Carved on his thigh lay a falchion, and under the gleam 225  
 of his helmet  
 Eyes more blue than the main shone awful, around him  
 A-haze  
 Shed in her love such grace, such state, and term he  
 daring.  
 Hovering over the water he came, upon glittering pinions,  
 Living, a wonder, outgrown from the night-maid gold of  
 his sandals,  
 Baring from billow to billow, and sweeping the crests 230  
 like a sea-gull;  
 Leaping the gulfs of the surge, as he laughed in the joy  
 of his leaping.  
 Fair and majestic he sprang to the rock; and the maiden  
 in wonder  
 Gazed for awhile, and then hid in the dark rolling wave  
 her tresses,  
 Fearful, the light of her eyes, while the boy (for her  
 sorrow had awed him)  
 Blushed at her blushes, and vanished, like mist on the 235  
 cliffs at the sunrise.  
 Fearful at length she looked forth: he was gone: she,  
 wild with amazement,  
 Wailed for her mother aloud: but the wail of the wind  
 only answered.  
 Sudden he flashed into sight, by her side; in his play  
 and anger

Moist were his eyes; and his breath like a rose-bod, as  
 bolder and bolder,  
 Hovering under her brows, like a swallow that haunts  
 by the house-eaves,  
 Delicate-handed, he lifted the veil of her hair; while  
 the maiden  
 Motionless, frozen with fear, wept loud; till his lips  
 unclosing  
 Poured from their pearl-string portal the musical wave  
 of his wonder  
 'Ah, well spoke she, the wise one, the grey-eyed Pallas  
 Athena,—  
 235 Known to Immortals alone are the prizes which lie for  
 the heroes  
 Ready prepared at their feet; for requesting a little, the  
 rulers  
 Pay back the loan tenfold to the man who, careless of  
 pleasure,  
 Thirsting for honour and toil, fares forth on a perilous errand  
 Led by the guiding of gods, and strong in the strength  
 of Immortals.  
 240 Thus have they led me to thee: from afar, unknowing,  
 I marked thee,  
 Shining, a snow-white cross on the dark green walls of  
 the sea-cliff;  
 Carven in marble I deemed thee, a perfect work of the  
 craftsman,  
 Like some of Amphion's, or far-famed Queen Cytherea,  
 Curious I came, till I saw how thy tresses streamed in  
 the sea wind,  
 245 Glowering, black as the night, and thy lips moved slow  
 in thy wailing.  
 Speak again now—Oh speak! For my soul is stirred to  
 avenge thee;

Tell me what barbarous haste, without law, unrighteous  
and heartless,  
Hateful to gods and to men, thus have bound thee, a  
shame to the sunlight,  
So an end prize to the sailor: but my prize now for  
a coward,  
Coward and shameless were he, who so finding a glorious  
jewel  
Cast on the way-side by fends, would not win it and keep  
it and wear it,  
Even as I will thee; for I swear by the head of my  
father,  
Bearing thee over the sea wave, to wed thee in Argos the  
fruitful,  
Beautiful, meed of my too no less than this head which  
I carry,  
Hidden here fearful—Oh speak!

But the maid, still dumb with amazement, as  
Watered her bosom with weeping, and longed for her  
home and her mother,  
Beautiful, eager, he wooed her, and kissed off her tears  
as he hovered,  
Roving at will, as a bee, on the brows of a rock nymph  
haunted,  
Garlanded o'er with vine, and acanthus, and clambering  
moss,  
Cool in the fierce still noon, where streams glance clear  
in the mossbeds,  
Hems on from blossom to blossom, and mingles the  
sweets as he tastes them,  
Beautiful, eager, he kissed her, and clasped her yet closer  
and closer,  
Praying her still to speak—

"Not cruel nor rough did my mother

Bear me to broad-browed Zeus in the depths of the brass-  
covered dungeons;  
Nor haer in vain, as I think, have I talked with the cunning  
of Hermes,  
Face unto face, as a friend; or from grey-eyed Pallas  
Athenè  
Learnt what is fit, and respecting myself, to respect in  
my dealings  
Those whom the gods should love; so fear not: in  
chaste espousals  
Only I woo thee, and sweet, that a queen, and alone  
without rival  
By me thou sittest in Argos of Hellas, throne of my  
father,  
Worshipped by fair-haired kings: why callest thou still  
on thy mother?  
Why did she leave thee thus here? For no-foeman has  
bound thee, no-foeman  
Winning with strokes of the sword such a prize, would so  
leave it behind him,  
Just as at first some colt, wild-eyed, with quivering  
nostril,  
Plunges in fear of the curb, and the fluttering robes of  
the rider;  
Soon, grown bold by despair, submits to the will of his  
master,  
Tamer and tamer each hour, and at last, in the pride of  
obedience,  
Answers the heel with a curvet, and arches his neck to  
be fondled,  
Cowed by the need that maid grew tame; while the  
hero indignant  
Tore at the fetters which held her: the brass, too  
cunningly tempered,

Held to the rock by the nails, deep wedged; till the  
 boy, aged with anger,  
 Drew from his ivory thigh, keen flashing, a falchion of  
 diamond—  
 'Now let the work of the smith try strength with the  
 arms of Immortals;  
 Dazzling it fell, and the blade, as the vine-hook shears  
 off the vine-bough,  
 Carried through the strength of the brass, till her arms  
 fell soft on his shoulder.  
 Once she essayed to escape but the ring of the water  
 was round her,  
 Round her the ring of his arms: and despairing she sank  
 on his bosom.  
 Then, like a fawn when startled, she looked with a shudder  
 to the seaward.  
 'Touch me not, wretch that I am! For accused, a  
 shame and a having,  
 Guiltless, accused no less, I await the revenge of the sea-  
 gods  
 'Wonder it comes! Ah go! Let me perish unseen, if I  
 perish!  
 Spare me the shame of thine eyes, when merciless fangs  
 must tear me  
 Piecemeal! Enough to endure by myself in the light of  
 the sunshine  
 Guiltless, the death of a kid!  
 \* But the boy still lingered  
 around her,  
 Lured, like a boy, to forgo her; and wakened the cliffs  
 with his laughter,  
 'You are the foe, then? A beast of the sea? I had deemed  
 him immortal  
 Titan, or Proteus' self, or Nereus, foeman of sailors:

Yet would I fight with them all, but Poseidon, shaker of  
 mountains,  
 Uncle of mine, whom I fear, as is fit; for he haunts on  
 Olympus,  
 310 Holding the third of the world; and the gods all rise at  
 his coming.  
 Unto none else will I yield, god-helped: how then to  
 a monster,  
 Child of the earth and of night, unreasoning, shapeless,  
 accursed?  
 'Art thou, too, even a god?'  
 'No god I,' smiling he answered,  
 'Mortal as thou, yet diviner: but mortal the herbs of  
 the ocean,  
 320 Equal to men in that only, and less in all else, for they  
 nourish  
 Blindly the life of the lips, untaught by the gods, with-  
 out wisdom.  
 Shame if I fled before such!'  
 In her heart new life was kindled,  
 Worship and trust, fair parents of love; but she answered  
 him sighing  
 'Beautiful, why wilt thou die? Is the light of the sun,  
 then, so worthless,  
 330 Worthless to sport with thy fellows in flowery glades of  
 the forest,  
 Under the broad green oaks, where never again shall I  
 wander,  
 Tossing the ball with my maidens, or wreathing the altar  
 in garlands,  
 Careless, with dances and songs, till the glens rang loud  
 to our laughter  
 Too full of death the great earth is already; the halls  
 full of weepers,



Quarried by tombs and cliffs, and the bones gleam white 325  
 on the sea-floor,  
 Numberless, gnawn by the heads which attend on the  
 pitiless sea-gods,  
 Even as mine will be soon: and yet noble it seems to  
 me, dying,  
 Giving my life for the people, to save to the arms of their  
 protectress  
 Maidens and youths for awhile: thee, fairest of all, shall  
 I slay thee?  
 And not the bones to the many, thus angering idly the sea  
 around once?  
 Either the monster will perish, or the sea-queen's self  
 overwhelm thee,  
 Vengeance, in tempest and foam, and the thundering walls  
 of the surges  
 Why wilt thou follow me down? can we love in the  
 black blank darkness?  
 I live in the realm of the dead, in the land where all is  
 forgot and  
 Why wilt thou follow me down? Is it joy, on the desolate 335  
 ocean,  
 Meagre to sit, grey ghosts in the depths of the grey salt  
 water?  
 Beautiful! why wilt thou die, and defraud fair girls of  
 thy manhood?  
 Surely one waits for thee longing, afar in the isles of the  
 ocean  
 Go thy way; I mine; for the gods grudge pleasure to  
 mortals.  
 Sobbing she ended her moan, as her neck, like a storm 340  
 bent my,  
 Dropped with the weight of her yoke, as her limbs sank,  
 weary with watching,

Soft on the hard lodged rock; but the boy, with his eye  
 on the monster,  
 Clapsed her, and stood, like a god; and his lips curved  
 proud as he answered—  
 'Great are the pitiless sea-gods; but greater the Lords  
 of Olympus;  
 345 Greater the Aegis-wielder, and greater is she who attends  
 him.  
 Clear-eyed Justice her name is, the counsellor, loved of  
 Athené,  
 Helper of heroes, who dare, in the god-given might of  
 their manhood  
 Greatly to do and to suffer, and far in the fens and the  
 forests  
 Smite the devourers of men, Heaven-hated, brood of the  
 giants,  
 350 Twyformed, strange, without like, who obey not the  
 golden-haired Rulers.  
 Vainly rebelling they rage, till they die by the swords of  
 the heroes,  
 Even as thou shalt die! for I burn with the wrath of my  
 father,  
 Wandering, led by Athené; and dare whatsoever betides  
 me.  
 Led by Athené I won from the grey-haired terrible sisters  
 355 Secrets hidden from men, when I found them asleep on  
 the sand-hills,  
 Keeping their eyes and their tooth, till they showed me  
 the perilous pathway  
 Over the waterless ocean, the valley that led to the  
 Gorgon  
 Her too I slew in my craft, Medusa, the beautiful horror;  
 Taught by Athené I slew her, and saw not herself; but her  
 image,

Watching the mirror of brass, in the shield which a god  
 decess had lent me;

Cleaving her brass-scaled throat, as she lay with her adlers  
 around her,

Fearless I bore off her head, in the folds of the mystical  
 goat-skin,

Hide of Amathetis, fair nurse of the Aegis-wielder

Hither I bear it, a gift to the gods; and a death to my  
 foe-men,

Freezing the seat to stone; so hide thine eyes from the  
 horror—

Kiss me but once, and I go.

Then lifting her neck like a seabird  
 Peering up over the wave, from the foam white swells of  
 her bosom,

Blinking she kissed him: afar, on the topmost Italian  
 summit

Laughed in the joy of her heart, far seeing, the queen  
 Aphrodite

Loosing his arms from her waist he flew upward, and  
 awaiting the sea-beast.

Onward it came from the southward, as busy and black  
 as a gale,

Lazily coasting along, as the fish fled leaping before it;

Lazily breathing the ripple, and watching by sandbar and  
 headland,

Listening for laughter of maidens at bleaching, or song  
 of the fisher,

Children at play on the pebbles, or cattle that pawed on  
 the sand-hills.

Rolling and unspung it came, where bedded in glistening  
 purple

Cold on the cold sea weeds lay the long white sides of the  
 maiden,

Framing, her face in her hands, and her tresses afloat  
 on the water

As when an osprey aloft, dark-eyebrowed, royally  
 crested,

Flags on by creek and by cove, and in scorn of the anger  
 of Nereus

Range, the king of the shore; if he see on a glittering  
 shallow,

Chasing the bass and the mullet, the fin of a wallowing  
 dolphin,

Haling, he wheels round slowly, in doubt of the weight  
 of his quarry,

Whether to clutch it alive, or to fall on the wretch like a  
 plummet,

Stunning with terrible talon the life of the brain in the  
 head-heads

Then rushes up with a scream, and stooping the wrath of  
 his eyebrows

Leaps from the sky, like a star, while the wind rattles  
 hoarse in his pinions.

Over him closes the foam for a moment; and then from  
 the sand-bed

Rolls up the great fish, dead, and his side gleams white  
 in the sun's me.

Thus fell the boy on the beast, unveiling the face of the  
 Gorgon

Thus fell the boy on the beast; thus rolled up the beast  
 in his horror,

Once, as the dead eyes glared into his; then his sides,  
 dead, sharpened

Stiffened and stood, brown rock, in the wash of the  
 wandering water

Beautiful, eager, triumphant, he leapt back again to  
 his treasure;

Leapt back again, full blest, toward arms spread wide to <sup>395</sup>  
 receive him.

Brimful of honour he clasped hers and armpit of love  
 she caressed him,

Answering lip with lip; while above them the queen  
 Aphrodite

Pouted on their foreheads and limbs, unseen, ambrosial  
 odours,

Gives of longing, and rapture, and chaste content in  
 espousals.

Happy when ere they be wedded appoints she, the Queen <sup>400</sup>  
 Aphrodite!

Laughing she called to her sister, the chaste Tritonid  
 Athene,

'Seest thou yonder thy pupil, thou maid of the Agre-  
 nider,

How he has turned himself wholly to love, and caresses  
 a daimsel,

Dreaming no longer of honour, or danger, or Pallas  
 A here?

Sweeter, it seems, to the young my gifts are so yield me <sup>405</sup>  
 the stripling;

Yield him me now, lest he die in his prime, like hapless  
 Adonis.'

Smiling she answered in turn, that chaste Tritonid  
 Athene

'Dear unto me, no less than to thee, is the wedlock of  
 heroes,

Dear, who can worthily win him a wife not unworthy,  
 and noble,

Pure w to the pure to beget brave children, the like of <sup>410</sup>  
 their father

Happy who thus stands linked to the heroes who were,  
 and who shall be;

Girdled with holiest awe, not sparing of self; for his mother  
 Watches his steps with the eyes of the gods; and his  
 wife and his children

Move him to plan and to do in the farm and the camp  
 and the council.

<sup>415</sup> Thence comes weal to a nation; but woe upon woe,  
 when the people

Mingle in love at their will, like the brutes, not knowing  
 the future?

Then from her gold-strung loom, where she wrought  
 in her chamber of cedar,

Awful and fair she arose; and she went by the glens of  
 Olympus,

Went by the isles of the sea, and the wind never ruffled  
 her mantle;

<sup>420</sup> Went by the water of Crete, and the black-beaked flocks  
 of the Phoenixes,

Came to the sea-girt rock which is washed by the surges  
 for ever,

Bearing the wealth of the gods, for a gift to the bride of  
 hero.

There she met Andromeda and Persea, shaped like  
 Immortals,

Solemn and sweet was her smile, while their hearts beat  
 loud at her coming

<sup>425</sup> Solemn and sweet was her smile, as she spoke to the pair  
 in her wisdom.

'Three things hold we, the rulers, who sit by the  
 founts of Olympus,

Wisdom, and prowess, and beauty; and freely we pour  
 them on mortals;

Pleased at our image in man, as father at his in his children.

One thing only we grudge, to mankind, whom a hero,  
 unthankful,



Boasts of our gifts as his own, stiffnecked, and dishonours 430  
the given.

Turning our weapons against us. Him Aë follows  
avenging;

Slowly she tracks him and sure, as a lyme-hound; sudden  
she grips him.

Crushing him, blind in his pride, for a sign and a terror  
to folly

This we avenge, as is fit; in all else never weary of giving.  
Come then, damsel, and know if the gods' grudge pressure 435  
is more

Loving and gentle she spoke; but the maid stood in  
awe, as the goddess

Parted with soft swift finger her tresses, and decked her  
in jewels,

Armlet and anklet and earbell; and over her shoulders  
a necklace,

Heavy, encased, the flower of the gold and the brass  
of the mountains

Trembling with joy she gazed, so well Hephaistos had 440  
made it,

Deep in the fuses of Aetna, while Charis his lady beside  
him,

Mingled her grace in his craft, as he wrought for his  
sister Athena

Then on the brow of the maiden a veil bound Pallas  
Athené;

Ample it fell to her feet, deep-fringed, a wonder of  
weaving.

Agè and agè agè it was wrought on the heights of 445  
Olympus,

Wrought in the gold strong loom, by the finger of cunning  
Athenè.

lyme-hound] bloodhound.

In it she wove all creatures that teem in the womb of the  
ocean,

Nereid, siren, and triton, and dolphin, and arrowy fishes  
Guttering round, many-hued, on the flame-red folds of  
the mantle

450 In it she wove, too, a town where grey-haired kings sat  
in judgement,

Sceptre in hand in the market they sat, doing sight by  
the people,

Wiser while above watched Justice, and near, far-seeing  
Apollo.

Round it she wove for a fringe all herbs of the earth and  
the water,

Violet, asphodel, ivy, and vine-leaves, roses and lilies,

455 Cora and sea-lan and tangle, the blooms and the palms  
of the ocean

Now from Olympus she bore it, a dowry to the bride of  
a hero.

Over the limbs of the damsel she wrapt it, the maid  
all trembled,

Shading her face with her hands; for the eyes of the  
goddess were awful.

Then, as a pine upon Ida when southwest winds blow  
landward,

460 Stately she bent to the damsel, and breathed on her  
under her breathing

Taller and fairer she grew; and the goddess spoke in her  
wisdom.

'Courage I give thee; the heart of a queen, and the  
mind of Immortals,

Godlike to talk with the gods, and to look on their eyes  
unshrinking.

Fearing the sun and the stars no more, and the bristling  
water;

Fearing naught only, the Lords of Olympus, friends of the  
heroes.

Chastely and wisely to govern thyself and thy house and  
thy people,

Beaming a god like thou to thy spouse, till dying I set thee  
free for a seat in the heavens, a sign and a hope to the  
seamen.

Spreading thy long white arms all right in the heights of  
the æther.

Hand by thy sire and the hero thy spouse, while near thee  
thy mother

Sits in her ivory chair, as she plait ambrosial tresses.

All right long thou wilt shine; all day thou wilt feast on  
Olympus.

Happy, the guest of the gods, by thy husband, the god-  
begotten.

Blissful, they turned them to go: but the fair tressed  
Palas Athene

Rose, like a pillar of tall white cloud, toward silver  
Olympus

Far above ocean and shore, and the peaks of the isles and  
the mainland,

Where no frost nor storm is, in clear blue windless abysses,  
High in the home of the summer, the seats of the happy  
Immortals,

Surrounded in keen deep blaze, unapproachable; there  
ever youthful.

Hebe, Harmonie, and the daughter of Jove, Aphrodite,

Danced in the white-kirtled dance with the gold-crowned  
Hours and the Graces.

Hand within hand, while clear piped Phoebe, queen of  
the woodlands.

All day long they rejoiced, but Athene still in her  
chamber

Bent herself over her loom, as the stars sang loud to her  
singing.

Chanting of order and right, and of foresight, warfare of  
nations

Chanting of labour and craft, and of wealth in the port  
and the garner;

Chanting of valour and fame, and the man who can fall  
with the foremost,

Fighting for children and wife, and the field with his  
father bequeathed him

Sweetly and solemnly sang she, or planned new lessons  
for mortals:

Happy, who hearing of thy lot, the wise unscathed Athenæ.

CHARLES KINGSLEY 1819-75

# SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

AN EPISODE

And the first grey of morning find the east,  
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream,  
But all the Tartar camp along the stream  
Was hush'd, and all the men were plung'd in sleep  
Sohrab alone, he left not adrift long  
He had wak'd, tossing on his bed,  
But when he grew dawn store in his tent,  
He rose and clad himself, and girt his sword,  
And took his horseman's cloak and rest, as tent,  
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,  
Through the camp to Peran Wisa's tent  
Though the black Tartar tents pass'd, which stood  
Clustering like beeches on the low flat strand  
Of Oxus, where the summer floods overflow  
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamirs:  
Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,  
And to a hillock came at the back  
From the stream's brink, the spot where first a boat,  
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.  
The men of former times had crown'd the hill  
With a clay figure, but that was fallen, and now  
The Tartars build there Peran Wisa's tent.  
A dome of straw, and o'er it tents were spread  
And there came there and went, and stood  
Upon the black and carpets in the tent,  
And found the old man sleeping on his bed  
Of rugs and furs, and near him lay his arms.  
And Peran Wisa rose, and through the sleep  
Was aw'd, for he left light, and old man's sleep;

# SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

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And he rose quickly on one arm, and said:  
'Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.  
Speak: is there news, or any night alarm?'  
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said:  
'Thou know'st me, Peran Wisa: it is I.  
The sun is not yet risen, and the fog  
Sleeps; but I sleep not: all night long I lie  
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee,  
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek  
Thy counsel, and we need thee as they son,  
In Samarcand, before the army march'd.  
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.  
Thou know'st it, since from Ader-bai, an first  
I came among the Tartars, and bore arms,  
I have still serv'd Afrasiab well, and shown,  
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.  
Thou too thou know'st, that while I still bear on  
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,  
And beat the Persians back on every field,  
I seek one man, one man, and one alone.  
Rustum, my father—who, I hop'd, should greet,  
Should one day greet, upon some well fought field,  
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.  
So I long hop'd, but him I never find.  
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.  
Let the two armies rest to-day—but I  
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords  
To meet me, man to man—if I prevail,  
Rustum will surely hear it, if I fail—  
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.  
Dread is the honour of a son in fight,  
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk  
But of a single combat Fame speaks clear.  
He spoke—and Peran Wisa took his hand



Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said  
 "O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!  
 Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,  
 And share the battle's common chance with us  
 Who love thee, but must press for ever first,  
 In single fight incurring single risk,  
 To find a father thou hast never seen?  
 That were far best, my son, to stay with us  
 Unmurmuring, in our tent, while I sit at war,  
 And when 'tis truce, then in Atropas's tower.  
 But, if this one desire indeed rules all,  
 To seek out Rostum—seek him not through fight:  
 Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,  
 O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!  
 But far hence seek him, for he is not here,  
 For now it is not as when I was young,  
 When Rostum was in front of every fray:  
 But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,  
 In Sestun, with Zal, his father old.  
 Whether that his own mighty strength at last  
 Feels the abhor'd approaches of old age;  
 Or in some quarrel with the Persian King  
 There goes—Thou wilt not! Yet my heart forebodes  
 Danger or death awaits thee on this field.  
 Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost  
 To us: fain therefore send thee hence, in peace  
 To seek thy father, not seek single fights  
 In vain,—but who can keep the lion's cub  
 From ravaging? and who govern Rostum's son?  
 Go: I will grant thee what thy heart desires."  
 So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left  
 His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay,  
 And o'er his shilly limbs his woollen coat  
 He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,

And threw a white cloak round him, and he took  
 In his right hand a ruler's staff, the sword;  
 And on his head he plac'd his sheep-skin cap,  
 Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara Kuni.  
 And rais'd the curtain of his tent, and call'd  
 His herald to his side, and went abroad.  
 The sun, by this, had risen, and clear'd the fog  
 From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands.  
 And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed  
 Into the open plain; so Haman bade;  
 Haman, who next to Peran-Wisazid  
 The host, and still was in his rusty prime.  
 From their black tents long files of horse, they stream'd:  
 As when, some grey November morn, the fies,  
 In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes  
 Stream over Caspian and the southern coasts  
 Of Euxine, from the Arlian estuaries,  
 Or some frosty Caspian reed-bed, southward bound  
 For the warm Persian sea-board: so they stream'd  
 The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,  
 First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears,  
 Large men, large steeds, who from Kachak come  
 And Kavva, and ferment the milk of mazes.  
 Next the more temperate Toorkmans of the south,  
 The Turkas, and the lances of Balore,  
 And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;  
 Light men, and on light steeds, who only drink  
 The acrid milk of camels, and their wicks  
 And then a swarm of wandering horses, who came  
 From far, and a more doubtful service own'd;  
 The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks  
 Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards  
 And close-set skull-caps, and those wilder herds  
 From frozen.

Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,  
 Lapps and unkemp'd Nuzaks, tribes who stray  
 Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizes,  
 Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere,  
 Their arms but in a camp into the plain  
 And on the other side the Persians form'd  
 First a light cloud of horse; Tartars they soon 'd,  
 The Hyats of Khorassan; and behind,  
 The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,  
 Marshal'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel.  
 But Peran Wisa with his herald came  
 Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,  
 And his staff kept back the foremost ranks.  
 And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw  
 That Peran Wisa kept the Tartars back,  
 He took his spear, and to the front he came,  
 And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they stood.  
 And the old Tartar came upon the sand  
 Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said:—  
 'Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!  
 Let there be truce between the hosts to-day  
 But choose a champion from the Persian lords  
 To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man.'  
 As, in the country, on a morn in June,  
 When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,  
 A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—  
 So, when they heard what Peran Wisa said,  
 A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran.  
 Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they lov'd.  
 But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,  
 Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,  
 That vast sky be girdling mountain of milk snow,  
 Winding so long, that, as they mount, they pass  
 Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,

Chok'd by the air, and scarce can they theme-lives  
 Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries—  
 In single file they move, and stop their breath,  
 For fear they should dislodge the overhanging snows—  
 So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.  
 And to Ferood his brother Chiefs came up  
 To counsel: Gudarz and Zourah came,  
 And Farabuz, who rul'd the Persian host  
 Second, and was the uncle of the King  
 These came and counsel'd; and then Gudarz said:—  
 'Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,  
 Yet champion have we none to match this youth.  
 He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.  
 But Rustum came last night, aloof he sits  
 And smokes, and has pitch'd his tents apart.  
 Him will I seek, and carry to his ear  
 The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name  
 Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.  
 Stand forth the while and take their challenge up  
 So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and said:—  
 'Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said.  
 Let Sohrab arm, and ye will find a man.'  
 He spoke; and Peran Wisa turn'd, and strode  
 Back through the opening squadrons to his tent  
 But through the smokes Persians Gudarz ran,  
 And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd  
 Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.  
 Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,  
 Just pitch'd: the high pavilion in the midst  
 Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around.  
 And Gudarz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found  
 Rustum: his morning meal was done, but still  
 The table stood beside him, charg'd with food;  
 A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,



Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,  
 Kalmauks and unkemp'd Kuzzaks, tribes who stray  
 Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kizh azes,  
 Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere  
 These all fill'd out from camp into the plain.  
 And on the other side the Persians form'd  
 First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,  
 The Hyats of Khorassan: and behind,  
 The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,  
 Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel.  
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 That Peran Wisa kept the Tartars back,  
 He took his spear, and to the front he came,  
 And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they stood.  
 And the old Tartar came upon the sand  
 Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said:—  
 'Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!  
 Let there be truce between the hosts to-day  
 But choose a champion from the Persian lords  
 To fight our champion Schrab, man to man.'  
 As, in the country, on a morn in June,  
 When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,  
 A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—  
 So, when they heard what Peran Wisa said,  
 A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran  
 Of pride and hope for Schrab, whom they  
 'But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,  
 Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,  
 That vast sky long, bearing mountain of milk snow;  
 Standing so high, that, as they mount, they pass  
 Long flocks of trailing birds dead on the snow,

Chok'd by the air, and scarce can they themselves  
 Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries—  
 In single file they move, and stop their breath,  
 For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows—  
 So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.  
 And to Ferood his brother Chiefs came up,  
 To console Gudurz and Zourrah came,  
 And Ferabuz, who rul'd the Persian host  
 Second, and was the uncle of the King  
 These came and counsel'd; and then Gudurz said:—  
 'Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,  
 Yet champions have we none to match this youth.  
 He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.  
 But Rustum came last night, aloof he sits  
 And silent, and has purch'd his tents quit,  
 Him will I seek, and carry to his ear  
 The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name.  
 Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight  
 Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up.'  
 So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and said:—  
 'Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said  
 Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man.'  
 He spoke; and Peran Wisa turn'd, and strode  
 Back through the opening squadrons to his tent,  
 But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,  
 And cross'd the camp watch as behind, and reach'd,  
 Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents  
 Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,  
 Just pitch'd: the high pavilion in the mid,  
 Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around.  
 And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found  
 Rustum: his morning meal was done, but still  
 The table stood beside him, charg'd with food;  
 A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,



At I look green meekly - and there Rustum sat  
 I sat, and held a falcon on his wing,  
 And play'd with him, and Gudarz came and stood  
 Before him; and he look'd, and saw him stand,  
 And with a cry sprang up and dropp'd the bird,  
 And greeted Gudarz with both hands; and said  
 \* Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight  
 What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink.  
 But Gudarz stood in the tent door, and said -  
 \* Not now - a time will come to eat and drink,  
 But not to-day: to-day has other needs.  
 The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze  
 For from the Tartars a challenge brought  
 To pick a champion from the Persian lords  
 To fight their champion - and thou know'st his name -  
 Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.  
 O Rustum, like thy might as the young man's!  
 He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart -  
 And he is young, and Iran's Chiefs are old,  
 Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee  
 Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose.  
 He spoke; but Rustum answer'd with a smile -  
 \* Go to! if Iran's Chiefs are old, then I  
 Am old: if the young are weak, the King  
 Is strangely: for the King, for Kai-Khosrow,  
 Himself is young, and honours younger men,  
 And lets the aged meekler to their graves.  
 Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young -  
 The young may use at Sohrab's van, not I  
 For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?  
 For what care I in the world's eye,  
 And not that one slight, helpless girl I have,  
 A son so lov'd, so brave, so good to war,  
 And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zai,

My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,  
 And clip his borders short, and drive the hands,  
 And he has none to guard his weak old age  
 There would I go, and have my arm set up,  
 And with my great name I need not speak of gain,  
 And spend the goodly treasures I have got,  
 And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,  
 And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,  
 And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no  
 more.  
 He spoke, and smil'd; and Gudarz made reply -  
 \* What then, O Rustum, wilt men say to this,  
 When Sohrab sees our bravest forth, and seeks  
 Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,  
 Hidest thy face? Tell heed, lest men should say,  
 Like some old miser, he hid his sword,  
 And thrust to peril it with younger men.  
 And, greatly mov'd, then Rustum made reply -  
 \* O Gudarz, wherefore dost thou say those words?  
 Thou knowest better words than this to say  
 What is one more, one less, obscure or fam'd,  
 Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?  
 Are not they mortal, am not I myself?  
 But who for men of naught would do great deeds?  
 Come, thou shalt see how Rustum holds his fame.  
 But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;  
 Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd  
 In single fight with any mortal man.  
 He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudarz turn'd, and ran  
 Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy,  
 Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came  
 But Rustum rode to his tent door, and call'd  
 His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,  
 And clad himself in steel: the arms he chose

Were plain, and on his shield was no device,  
 Only his helm was rich, and with gold,  
 And from the fluted spine atop a plume  
 Of horsehair wav'd, a scarlet horsehair plume.  
 So arm'd he-tered forth; and Raksh, his horse,  
 Follow'd him, like a faithful hound, at heel,  
 Raksh, whose renown was nois'd through all the earth,  
 The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once  
 Did in Bekhara by the river find  
 A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,  
 And rear'd him, a bright bay, with lofty crest;  
 Dight with a saddle-cloth of broad'er'd green,  
 Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd  
 All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know:  
 So follow'd, Rustum left his tent, and cross'd  
 The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd,  
 And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts  
 Hail'd; but the Tartars knew not who he was.  
 And dear as the wet diver to the eyes  
 Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,  
 By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,  
 Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,  
 Having made up his pile of precious pearls,  
 Rejoins her in their hut upon the sand.  
 So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came,  
 And Rustum to the Persian front appear'd,  
 And to the Persian host appear'd, and came  
 And made the Tartars cut a swath  
 Down the middle of a rich man's corn,  
 And on each side are squares of standing corn,  
 And in the middle a square of standing corn.  
 So on each side were squares of men, with spears  
 Bright, and the Tartars in the open sand.  
 And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast

His eyes towards the Tartar tent, and saw  
 Sohrab come forth, and ey'd him as he came.  
 As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,  
 Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge  
 Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire—  
 At cock-crow, on a starry winter's morn,  
 When the frost flowers the whiten'd window-pane  
 And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts  
 Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum ey'd  
 The unknown adventurous Youth, who from afar  
 Came seeking Rustum, and desiring to  
 All the most valiant carols; long he perus'd  
 His spurs'd air, and wonder'd who he was.  
 For very young he seem'd, tender, rear'd  
 Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,  
 Which in a queen's secluded garden throws  
 Its slight dark shadow on the moonal turf,  
 By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound—  
 So slender Sohrab seem'd, as softly rear'd,  
 And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul.  
 As he beheld him coming; and he stood,  
 And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said:  
 'O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,  
 And warm, and pleasant; but the ground is cold.  
 Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.  
 Behold me; I am vast, and clad in iron,  
 And tried; and I have stood on many a field  
 Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe.  
 Never was that field lost, or that foe slain.  
 O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?  
 Be govern'd; quit the Tartar host, and come  
 To Iran, and be as my son to me.  
 And fight beneath my banner till I die.  
 There are no youths in Iran brave as thou.'

So a space, musing, Sohrab heard his voice,  
The mighty voice of Rostum, and he saw  
His giant figure planted on the sand,  
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief  
Has builded on the waste in former years  
Against the numbers, and he saw that head,  
Streak'd with its first grey hair: hope fill'd his soul;  
And he ran forwards and embrac'd his knees,  
And clasp'd his hand within his own and said:—

"Oh, by thy father's head! by thine own soul,  
Art thou not Rostum? Speak! art thou not he?"

But Rostum, ey'd a glance the kneeling youth,  
And turn'd away, and spoke to his own soul:—

"Ah me, I guess what this young fox may mean.

False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys

For if I now confess this thing he asks,

And hark it not, but say—*Rostum is here*—

He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,

But he will find some pretext not to fight,

And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,

A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.

And on a feast-day, in Afrasiab's hall,

In Samarcand, he will arise and cry—

"I challeng'd once, when the two-armies camp'd  
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords

To cope with me in single fight, but they

Shrank, only Rostum dar'd then me and I

Chang'd glances, and went on equal terms away."

So will he speak, perhaps, while men appal

And were the chiefs of Iran sham'd through me."

And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud

"Rise! what's the use of this vainly questioning thine

Of Rostum? I am here, whom thou hast call'd

By challenge to fight: make good thy vaunt, or yield."

Is it with Rostum only thou wouldst fight?

Rash boy, men look on Rostum's face and fier.

For well I know, that did great Rostum stand

Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,

There would be then no talk of fighting more.

But seeing what I am, I tell thee this,

Do thou record it as the utmost woe.

Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt, and yield;

Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds

Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer floods,

Oxus in summer wash them all away."

He spoke; and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet:—

"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so.

I am no girl, to be made pale by words.

Yet thus thou hast said well, did Rostum stand

Here on this field, there were no fighting then,

But Rostum is far hence, and we stand here

Begin; then art more vast, more dread than I,

And thou art prov'd, I know, and I am young—

But yet Success sways with the breath of Heaven,

And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure

Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know,

For we are all like swimmers in the sea,

Fon'd on the top of a huge wave of Fate,

Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.

And whether it will heave us up to land,

Or whether it will roll us out to sea,

Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,

We know not, and no search will make us know:

Only the event will teach us in its hour."

He spoke; and Rostum answer'd not, but hurl'd

His spear: down from the shoulder, down it came,

As on some partridge in the corn a hawk

That long has tower'd in the airy clouds



Drops like a plummet: Sohrab saw it come,  
 And sprang aside, quick as a flash: the spear  
 He'd, and went quivering down into the sand,  
 When a second long wide then Sohrab threw  
 In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield: sharp rang,  
 The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.  
 And Rustum seiz'd his club, which none but he  
 Could wield: an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,  
 Such as the trees which men in useless plains  
 To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,  
 Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up  
 By their dark springs, the wind in winter time  
 Has made in Himalayan forests wreck,  
 And strewn the branches with torq' boughs, so huge  
 The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck  
 One stroke: but again Sohrab sprang aside  
 Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came  
 Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.  
 And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell  
 To his knees, and with his fingers clutch'd the sand:  
 And now must Sohrab move unsparingly his sword,  
 And pierc'd the mighty Rustum while he lay  
 Dazed, and on his knees, and chok'd with sand.  
 But he did not, and would, nor had he his sword,  
 But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said:  
 "Thou still art brave, that man of thine will float  
 In the summer of his days, and not my bones  
 But mine, and be not wroth; not wroth am I:  
 When I was young, with forks my soul  
 Who art so true, and so true to my soul,  
 Boy as I am I shall be true too,  
 Have waded foremost in their good waves,  
 As a man of war, and a man of dying men;

But never was my heart thus touch'd before  
 Are they from Heaven, these softening of the heart?  
 O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven  
 Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,  
 And make a truce, and sit upon the sand  
 And pledge each other in red wine, like legends,  
 And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.  
 There are enough foes in the Persian host  
 Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;  
 Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou  
 Mayst fight, fight them, when they confront thy spear,  
 But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"  
 He ceas'd: but while he spake, Rustum had risen,  
 And stood erect, trembling with rage: his club  
 He left to be, but had regained his spear,  
 Whose fiery point now in his man's right hand  
 Glaz'd bright and battleful, like that autumn star,  
 The baleful sign of fever: just had soil'd  
 His starry crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms  
 His breast heav'd; his lips foam'd; and twice his voice,  
 Was chok'd with rage: at last these words broke way:—  
 "Gird, ramble with thy feet, not with thy hands.  
 Curl'd manna, dancer, coiner of sweet words.  
 Fight; let me hear thy hateful voice no more.  
 Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now  
 With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;  
 But on the Oxus sands, and in the dance  
 Of battle, and with me, who make no play  
 Of war: I fight it out, and stand to hand  
 Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!  
 Remember all thy valours: try thy tents  
 And cunning: all the pity I had is gone.  
 Because thou hast shak'd me before both the hosts  
 With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles."

He spoke, and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,  
 And he too drew his sword: at once they rush'd  
 To get her as the carles in the prey  
 Came rushing down, and in the  
 One from the east, one from the west, their shields  
 Dash'd with a clang together, and a din  
 Rose, such as that the new-cutters  
 Make often in the forest's heart at morn.  
 Of hewing axes, crashing trees: such blows  
 Rustum and Sohrab on each other haw'd.  
 And you would say that sun and stars took part  
 In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud  
 Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun  
 Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose  
 Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,  
 And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair  
 In gloom they twain were wrapp'd; and they alone  
 For both the on-looking hosts on either hand  
 Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,  
 And the sun sparkled on the Orus-stream.  
 But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes  
 And labouring breath: first Rustum struck the shield  
 And Sohrab saw it burst, the steel spik'd; and  
 Rung the iron plate, and ta'nt to reach the skin,  
 And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry grain.  
 Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,  
 And drove it straight through: but as the crest  
 Fell away, and that proud warrior plung'd  
 Never till now defil'd, sunk to the dust;  
 And Rustum, his sword drawn, but then the gloom  
 Grew thicker, and under-murder'd in the air,  
 And as he pined the road, an Ruksh, the horse,  
 Was standing by his side, and a cry  
 No none's cry was that, more like the roar

Of some pass'd desert lion, who a lion  
 Has trail'd the hunter's javelin on his side,  
 And comes straight to die upon the sand.  
 The two hosts heard that cry, and quail'd for fear,  
 And Orus curled as it cross'd his stream.  
 But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,  
 And struck again; and again Rustum howl'd  
 His head; but this time all the blade, like grass,  
 Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,  
 And in his hand the hilt remain'd alone.  
 Then Rustum, with his head, his dreadful ves-  
 sel clasp'd, and he shook on high his menacing  
 And shouted, *Rustum!* Sohrab heard that shout,  
 And a rank amaz'd back he recoil'd one step,  
 And stann'd with blinking eyes the advancing Form  
 And then he stood awhile, and he dropp'd  
 His sword, and he fell on his side  
 He reid, and staggering back, sunk to the ground,  
 And then the gloom dispers'd, and the wind fell,  
 And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all  
 The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair,  
 Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,  
 And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.  
 Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began  
 'Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill  
 A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,  
 And bear thy trophies to Afrasub's tent.  
 Or else that the great Rustum would come down  
 Himself to fight, and that thy wife would move  
 His heart to take a gift, and let thee go  
 And then that all the Tartar host would praise  
 Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,  
 To glad thy father in his weak old age.  
 Fool! thou art slain, and by an unknown man!

Dearest to the red jackals shalt thou be,  
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old.'

And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied:—  
'Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain  
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!  
No Rustum slays me, and this filial heart  
For were I match'd with ten such men as thou,  
And I were he who till to-day I was,  
They should be lying here, I standing there.  
But that beloved name unner'd my arm—  
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,  
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield  
Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd toe,  
And now thou boastest, and mock'st my fate.  
But hear thou this, fierce Man, tremble to hear!  
I beg thee Rustum shall avenge my death!

My ainer, whom I seek through all the world,  
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee.'

As when some hunter in the spring hath found  
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,

Upon the craggy side of a hill lake,  
And pierc'd her with an arrow as she rose,  
And follow'd her to find her where she fell.

Far off;—when her mate comes winging back  
From hunting, and a great way off describes  
His madd'ning young left sole at that, he checks  
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps

Cirches above his cry, with loud screams  
—Chasing his mate back to her nest—out she

Leaves him with the arrow in her side,  
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,

A heap of fluttering feathers—never more  
Shall the lake gaze on, flying over it,  
Never the black and dripping precipices

Echo her stormy scream as she sails by—  
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss—

So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood  
Over his dying son, and knew him not.

But with a cold, incredulous voice, he said:—  
'What prate is this of fathers and revenge  
The mighty Rustum never had a son.'

And, with a fading voice, Sohrab replied:—

'Ah yes, he had, and that lost son am I  
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,  
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,  
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;  
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap

To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee  
Fierce Man, bethink thee, for an only son!  
What wilt thou give, what wilt that vengeance be!  
Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!

Yet him I pity not so much, out her,  
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells  
With that old King, her father, who grows gray  
With age, and rules over the valiant Koordi.

Her most I pity, who no more will see  
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,  
With spoils and honour, when the war is done.

But a dark rumour will be bruised up,  
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;  
And then will that defenceless woman learn  
That Sohrab with revenge her sight no more,

But that in battle with a nameless foe,  
By the far distant Oxus, he is slain.'

He spoke, and as he ceased he wept aloud,  
'Thinking of her he left and his own death.  
He spoke, but Rustum listen'd, plung'd in thought.  
Nor did he yet believe it was his son



Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew;  
 If he had had sure tieing that the babe,  
 Which was in Ader-bajan born to him,  
 Had been a puny girl, no boy at all.  
 So that had mother sent him word, for fear  
 Rustum should take the boy, to train in arms;  
 And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,  
 By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son,  
 Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame,  
 So deem'd he; yet he listen'd, plung'd in thought;  
 And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide  
 Of the bright rocking Ocean sets to shore  
 At the full moon; tears gather'd in his eyes;  
 For he remember'd his own early youth,  
 And all its bounding rapture, as, at dawn,  
 The Shepherd from his mountain lodge descends  
 A far bright City, smitten by the sun,  
 Through many rolling clouds;—so Rustum saw  
 His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;  
 And that old King, her father, who lov'd well  
 His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child  
 With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,  
 They three, in that long-distant summer-time—  
 The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt  
 And hunt, and morn on those delightful hills  
 In Ader-bajan. And he saw that Youth,  
 Of age and looks to be his own dear son,  
 Pitons and lovely, lying on the sand,  
 Like some rich hyacinth, which by the scythe  
 Of an unskillful gardener has been cut,  
 Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,  
 And lies, a tattered tower of purple bloom,  
 On the mown, dying grass;—so Sohrab lay,  
 Lovely in death, upon the common sand.

And Rustum gaz'd on him with grief, and said:—  
 'O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son  
 Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have lov'd!  
 Yet here thou earnest, Sohrab, at else men  
 Have told thee false,—thou art not Rustum's son.  
 For Rustum had no son: one child he had—  
 But one—a girl;—who with her mother now  
 Flies some light female task, nor dreams of us—  
 Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war.  
 But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath; for now  
 The anguish of the deep-fur'd spear grew fierce,  
 And he desired to draw forth the steel,  
 And let the blood flow free, and so to die;  
 But first he would convince his stubborn foe—  
 And thus sternly on one arm, he said:  
 'Man, who art thou ~~who~~ dost deny my words?  
 Truth sits upon the lips of dying men.  
 And falsehood, while I liv'd, was far from me.  
 I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear  
 That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,  
 That she might prick it on the babe she bore.'  
 He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks;  
 And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand  
 Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,  
 That the hard iron corset clank'd aloud:  
 And to his heart he press'd the other hand,  
 And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:—  
 'Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie.  
 If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son.'  
 Then, with weak heavy fingers, Sohrab loos'd  
 His belt, and near the shoulder on his arm,  
 And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points  
 Prick'd as a spinning workman, in Peen,  
 Pricks with vermilion some dear porcelain vase,

An emperor's gift : at early morn he paints,  
 And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp  
 Lights up his studio as forehead and thin hands —  
 So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd  
 On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.  
 It was that Griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,  
 Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,  
 A helpless babe, among the mountain rocks.  
 Him that kind Creature round, and rear'd, and lov'd —  
 Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.  
 And Sohrab bethought that figure on his arm,  
 And himself spann'd it long with mournful eyes,  
 And then he touch'd it with his hand and said :

'How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign  
 Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?'

He spoke : but Rustum gaz'd, and gaz'd, and stood  
 Speechless; and then he utter'd one sharp cry —  
 O Boy — thy Father! — and his voice chok'd there  
 And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,  
 And his heart swam, and he sank down to earth.  
 But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast  
 His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,  
 And with fond faltering fingers strok'd his cheeks,  
 Trying to call him back to life : and life  
 Came back to Rustum, and he open'd his eyes,  
 And they stood wide with horror; and he seiz'd  
 In both his hands the dust which lay around,  
 And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair,  
 His hair, and face, and beard, and guttering arms —  
 And long convulsive groanings shook his breast,  
 And he seiz'd him, and he clutch'd his sword,  
 To draw it, and for ever let life out.  
 But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,  
 And with a soothing voice he spoke, and said —

'Father, forbear : for I but meet to-day  
 The doom that at my birth was written down  
 In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand,  
 Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,  
 When first I saw thee; and thy heartspoke too,  
 I know it : but Fate wend those promptings down  
 Under its iron heel : Fate, Fate engag'd  
 The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear.  
 But let us speak no more of this : I find  
 My father; let me feel that I have found.  
 Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take  
 My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,  
 And wash them with thy tears, and say, My Son !  
 Quick! quick! for number'd are my sands of life,  
 And swift; for like the lightning to this field  
 I came, and like the wind I go away —  
 Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.  
 But it was writ in Heaven that this should be'  
 So said he : and his voice releas'd the heart  
 Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth, he cas'd  
 His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,  
 And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts  
 When they saw Rustum's grief : and Raksh, the horse,  
 With his head bowing to the ground, and mane  
 Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe  
 First to the one then to the other mov'd  
 His head, as if inquiring what their grief  
 Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,  
 The big warm tears roll'd down, and ead'd the sand.  
 But Rustum said him with a stern voice, and said :  
 'Raksh, now thou grievest; but O Raksh, thy feet  
 Should then have rotted on thy numble joints,  
 When first they bore thy Master to this field.'  
 But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said : —

'Is this then Rukh? How often, in past days,  
My mother told me of thee, thou brave Sreed!  
My terrible father's terrible horse, and said,  
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.  
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane.  
O Rukh, thou art more fortunate than I;  
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,  
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.  
And thou hast trod the sands of Scutan,  
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake  
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself  
Has often suck'd thy neck, and given thee food,  
Corn in a golden platter soak'd with wine,  
And said—"O Rukh! bear Rustum well"—but I  
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,  
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,  
Nor slak'd my thirst at the clear Helmund-stream:  
But lodg'd among my father's foes, and seen  
Afriasiab's cities only, Samarcand,  
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,  
And the black Toorkman tents; and only drunk  
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,  
Kokik, and where the Kalmyks feed their sheep,  
The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream—  
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die'

And with a heavy groan, Rustum replied—  
'Oh that its waves were flowing over me!  
Oh that I saw its grains of yellow silt  
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!  
'And with a grave mad voice, Sohrab replied—  
'Desire not that, my father; thou must live.  
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,  
As some are born to be obscur'd, and die.  
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,

And reap a second glory in thine age.  
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.  
But come; thou seest this great host of men  
Which follow me, I pray thee, slay not these:  
Let me entreat for them; what have they done?  
They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.  
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.  
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,  
But carry me with thee to Seistan,  
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,  
Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends,  
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,  
And heap a stately mound above my bones,  
And plant a far-seen pillar over all:  
That so the passing horseman on the waste  
May see my tomb a great way off, and say—  
*Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,  
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill—*  
And I be not forgotten in my grave.'  
And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied—  
'Fear not; as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,  
So shall it be: for I will burn my tents,  
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,  
And carry thee away to Seistan,  
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,  
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.  
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,  
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,  
And plant a far-seen pillar over all:  
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave  
And I will spare thy host: yea, let them go:  
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.  
What should I do with slaying any more?  
For would that all whom I have ever slain



Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,  
 And they who were call'd champions in their time,  
 And through whose death I won that fame I have;  
 And I were nothing but a common man,  
 A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,  
 So thou mightest live too, my Son, my Son!  
 Or rather would that I, even I myself,  
 Might now be lying on this bloody sand,  
 Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,  
 Not thou of mine; and I might die, not thou;  
 And I, not thou, be borne to Scistan.  
 And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;  
 And say—*O son, I weep thee not too sore,  
 For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end.*—  
 But now in blood and battles was my youth,  
 And full of blood and battles is my age,  
 And I shall never see the life of blood."

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:—  
 'A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful Man.  
 But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now:  
 Not yet: but thou shalt have it on that day,  
 When thou shalt sail in a high-masted Ship,  
 Thou and the other peers of Kai-Khosrow,  
 Returning home over the salt blue sea,  
 From laying thy dear Master in his grave.'

And Rastum gaz'd on Sohrab's face, and said  
 'Soon be that day, my Son, and deep that sea.  
 Till then, if Fate so wills, let me endure.'

He spoke, and Sohrab smil'd on him, and took  
 The spear, and drew it from his side, and eas'd  
 His wound's impetuous anguish—but the blood  
 Came welling from the open gash, and life  
 Flow'd with the stream—*at* down his cold white side  
 The crimson torrent ran, dim now, and soil'd,

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Like the soil'd tresses of white violets  
 Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,  
 By romping children, whom their nurses call  
 From the hot fields at noon; his head droop'd low,  
 His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay—  
 White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,  
 Deep, heavy gasps, quivering through all his frame,  
 Convuls'd him back to life, he open'd them  
 And fix'd them feebly on his father's face  
 Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs  
 Unwillingly the spirit fled away,  
 Regretting the warm mansion which it left,  
 And youth and bloom, and this delightful world.

So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead.  
 And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak  
 Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.  
 As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd  
 By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear  
 His house, now, mid their broken flights of steps,  
 Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—  
 So on the sand lay Rustum by his son,  
 And night came down over the solemn waste,  
 And the two gazing-hosts, and that sole pair,  
 And darken'd all; and a cold fog, with night,  
 Crept from the Oxus. Soon a harm arose,  
 As of a great assembly loos'd, and fires  
 Began to twinkle through the fog: for now  
 Both armies mov'd to camp, and took their meal:  
 The Persians took it on the open sands  
 Southward; the Tartars by the river margin:  
 And Rustum and his son were left alone.

But the majestic River floated on,  
 Out of the mist and hum of that low land,  
 Into the frosty starlight, and there mov'd,

875

Rejoicing, through the hush'd Cherssman waste,  
 Under the solitary moon he flow'd  
 Right for the Polar Star, past Oguné,  
 Brimming, and bright, and large: their sands begin  
 To bear his watery march, and dam his streams,  
 And split his currents; that for many a league  
 The shorn and parcel'd Oxus strains along  
 Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles—  
 Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had  
 In his high mountain cradle in Pamere,  
 A foil'd circuitous wanderer—till at last  
 The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide  
 His luminous home of waters opens, bright  
 And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bath'd stars  
 Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea

## BALDER DEAD

*An Epode*

I

SENDING

'So on the floor lay Balder dead; and round  
 Lay thickly strewn swords axes darts and spears  
 Which all the Gods in sport had idly thrown  
 At Balder, whom no weapon pierc'd or clove  
 But in his breast stood fixt the fatal bough  
 Of mistletoe, which Lök the Accuser gave  
 To Hoder, and unwitting Hoder threw:  
 'Gamat that alone had Balder's life no charm.  
 And all the Gods and all the Heroes came  
 And stood round Balder on the bloody floor  
 Weeping and wailing; and Valhalla rang  
 Up to its golden roof with sobs and cries:

And on the tables stood the untasted meats,  
 And in the horns and gold-rim'd skulls the wine:  
 And now would Night have fallen, and found them yet  
 Wailing; but otherwise was Odin's will  
 And thus the Father of the Ages spake—

'Enough of tears, ye Gods, enough of wail,  
 Not to lament in was Valhalla made.  
 If any here might weep for Balder's death  
 I most might weep, as Father, such a son  
 I lose to-day, so bright, so lov'd a God  
 But he has met that doom which long ago  
 The Nornies, when his mother bare him, spun,  
 And Fate set seal, that so his end must be.  
 Balder has met his death, and ye survive  
 Weep him an hour; but what can grief avail?  
 For you yourselves, ye Gods, shall meet your doom,  
 All ye who hear me, and inhabit Heaven,  
 And I too, Odin too, the Lord of all;  
 But ours we shall not meet, when that day comes,  
 With woman's tears and weak complaining cries—  
 Why should we meet another's portion so?  
 Rather it fits you, having wept your hour,  
 With cold dry eyes, and hearts compos'd and stern,  
 To live, as erst, your daily life in Heaven;  
 By me shall vengeance on the murderer Lok,  
 The Foe, the Accuser, whom, though all Gods, we hate,  
 Be strictly car'd for, in the appointed day  
 Meanwhile, to-morrow, when the morning dawns,  
 Bring wood to the seashore to Balder's ship,  
 And on the deck build high a funeral pile,  
 And on the top lay Balder's corpse, and put  
 Fire to the wood, and send him out to sea  
 To burn, for that is what the dead desire.'

So having spoke, the King of Gods arose  
 And mounted his horse Sleipner, whom he rode,  
 And from the hall of Heaven he rode away  
 To Lidskalf, and sat upon his throne,  
 The Mount, from whence his eye surveys the world, 50  
 And far from Heaven he turn'd his shining orbs  
 To look on Midgard, and the earth, and men:  
 And on the conjuring Lappet he bent his gaze  
 Whom antler'd reindeer pull o'er the snow;  
 And on the Finns, the gentlest of mankind, 55  
 Fair men, who live in holes under the ground:  
 Nor did he look once more to Ida's plain,  
 Nor towards Valhalla, and the sorrowing Gods;  
 For well he knew the Gods would heed his word,  
 And cease to mourn, and think of Balder's pyre, 60

But in Valhalla all the Gods went back  
 From around Balder, all the Heroes went;  
 And left his body stretch'd upon the floor  
 And on their golden chairs they sat again,  
 Beside the tables, in the hall of Heaven; 65  
 And before each the cooks who serv'd them plac'd  
 New messes of the bear Serminster's flesh,  
 And the Valkyries crown'd their horns with mead.  
 So they, with pent-up hearts and tearless eyes,  
 Waiting no more, in silence ate and drank, 70  
 While Twilight fell, and sacred Night came on.

But the blind Hoder left the feasting Gods  
 In Odin's hall, and went through Asgard streets,  
 And past the haven where the Gods have moor'd  
 Their ships, and through the gate beyond the wall, 75  
 Though sightless, yet his own mind led the God  
 Down to the margin of the roaring sea

He came, and sadly went along the sand  
 Between the waves and black o'erhanging cliffs  
 80 Where in and out the screaming sea-fowl fly,  
 Until he came to where a gully breaks  
 Through the cliff wall, and a fresh stream runs down  
 From the high rocks behind, and starts the sea.  
 There in the glen Fensler stands, the house  
 85 Of Frea, honour'd Mother of the Gods,  
 And shows its lighted windows to the main  
 There he went up, and pass'd the open doors  
 And in the hall he found those women old,  
 The Prophesesses, who by the eternal  
 90 On Frea's hearth feed high the sacred fire  
 Both night and day; and by the inner wall  
 Upon her golden chair the Mother sat,  
 With folded hands, reviving things to come  
 To her crew Hoder neary and spoke, and said:—

95 'Mother, a child of bale thou bar'st in me  
 For, first, thou bar'st me with bandied eyes,  
 Sightless and helpless, wammering weak in Heaven;  
 And, after that, of ignorant useless mind  
 Thou bar'st me, an unforseeing soul:  
 100 That I alone must take the branch from Lok,  
 The Foe, the Accuser, whom, though Gods, we hate,  
 And cast at the dear lov'd Balder's breast  
 At whom the Gods in sport their weapons throw—  
 'Gainst that alone had Balder's life no charm:  
 105 Now therefore what to attempt, or whether fly?  
 For who will bear my hateful sight in Heaven?  
 Can I, O Mother, bring them Balder back?  
 Or—for thou know'st the Fates, and things allow'd—  
 Can I with Hela's power a compact strike,  
 110 And make exchange, and give my life for his?



He spoke the Mother of the Gods replied,  
 'Hoder, ill-nated, child of bale, my son,  
 Sightless in soul and eye, what words are these?  
 That one, long portm'd with his doom of death,  
 Should change his lot, and fill another's life  
 And Hela yield to this, and let him go!  
 On Balder Death hath and her hand, not thee;  
 Nor doth she count this life a price for that.  
 For many Gods in Heaven, not thou alone,  
 Would freely die to purchase Balder back,  
 And wend themselves to Hela's gloomy realm.  
 For not so gladsome is that life in Heaven  
 Which Gods and Heroes lead, in feast and fray,  
 Waiting the darkness of the final times,  
 That one should grieve for Balder's sake,  
 Balder their joy, so bright, so lov'd a God.  
 But Fate withstands, and laws forbid this way.  
 Yet in my secret mind one way I know,  
 Nor do I judge if it shall ym or fail:  
 But much must still be tried, which shall but fail.'

And the blind Hoder answer'd her, and said:  
 'What way is this, O Mother, that thou show'st?  
 Is it a matter which a God might try?'

And straight the Mother of the Gods replied:  
 'These is a way which leads to Hela's realm,  
 Untrodden, lonely, far from light and Heaven.  
 Who goes that way must take no other horse  
 To ride, but Sleipner, Odinn's horse, alone.  
 Nor must he choose that common path of Gods  
 Which every day they come and go in Heaven,  
 O'er the bridge Bifrost, where is Himmal's watch,  
 Past Midgard Fortress, down to Earth and men;  
 But he must tread a dark untravell'd road

Which branches from the north of Heaven, and ride  
 Nine days, nine nights, towards the Northern ice,  
 Through valleys deep-engulph'd, with roaring streams.  
 And he will reach on the tenth even a bridge  
 Which spans with golden arches Glads's stream,  
 Not Bifrost, but that bridge a Damsel keeps,  
 Who tells the passing troops of dead their way  
 To the low shore of ghosts, and Hela's realm.  
 And she will bid him northward steer his course,  
 Then he will journey through no lighted land,  
 Nor see the sun arise, nor see it set;  
 But he must ever watch the northern Bear  
 Who from her frozen height with jealous eye  
 Confronts the Dog and Hunter in the south,  
 And is alone not dipt in Ocean's stream.  
 And straight he will come down to Ocean's strand,  
 Ocean, whose watery ring enfolds the world,  
 And on whose marge the ancient Giants dwell.  
 But he will reach its unknown northern shore,  
 Far, far beyond the outmost Giant's home,  
 At the chink'd fields of ice, the waste of snow;  
 And he will fare across the dismal ice  
 Northward, until he meets a stretching wall  
 Barring his way, and in the wall a grate.  
 But then he must dismount, and on the ice  
 Tighten the girths of Sleipner, Odinn's horse,  
 And make him leap the grate, and come within.  
 And he will see stretch round him Hela's realm,  
 The plains of Nifheim, where dwell the dead,  
 And hear the roaring of the streams of Hela  
 And he will see the feeble shadowy tribes,  
 And Balder sitting crown'd, and Hela's throne  
 Then he must not regard the wailful ghosts  
 Who all will flit, like eddying leaves, around;

But he must straight accept their solemn Queen,  
And pay her homage, and entreat with prayers,  
Telling her all that grief they have in Heaven  
For Balder whom she holds by right below  
If haply he may melt her heart with words,  
And make her yield, and give him Balder back.

Shospoke: but Hoder answer'd her and said  
'Mother, a dreadful way is this thou show'st.  
No journey for a sightless God to go.'

And straight the Mother of the Gods replied:—  
'Therefore thyself thou shalt not go, my son:  
But he whom first thou meetest when thou com'st  
To Asgard, and declarest this hidden way,  
Shall go, and I will be his guide unseen.'

She spoke, and on her face let fall her veil,  
And bow'd her head, and sat with folded hands.  
But at the central hearth those Women old,  
Who while the Mother spake had ceased their toil,  
Began again to heap the sacred fire.  
And Hoder turn'd, and left his mother's house,  
Fensateer, whose lit windows look'd to sea,  
And came again down to the roaring waves,  
And ock along the beach to Asgard went  
Pondering on that which Frey said should be.

But Night came down, and darken'd Asgard streets.  
Then from their leath'd seat the Gods arose,  
And lighted torches, and took up the corpse  
Of Balder from the floor of Odin's hall,  
And hid it on a bier, and bare him home  
Through the star-darken'd streets to his own house  
Brendablik, on whose columns Balder pray'd  
The enchantments, that recall the dead to life:

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For wise he was, and many curious arts,  
Postures of runes, and healing herbs he knew;  
Unhappy: but that art he did not know  
To keep his own life safe, and see the run—  
'There to his hall the Gods brought Balder home,  
And each wept him as he laid him down,  
'Would that ourselves, O Balder, we were borne  
Home to our halls, with torchlight, by our kin,  
So thou might'st live, and still delight the Gods.'

They spake: and each went home to his own house.  
But there was one, the first of all the Gods  
For speed, and Hermod was his name in Heaven;  
Most fleet he was, but now he went the last,  
Heavy in heart for Balder, to his house  
Which he in Asgard built him, there to dwell,  
Against the harbour, by the city wall  
Him the band Hoder met, as he came up  
From the sea-cityward, and knew his step;  
Nor yet could Hermod set his brother's face,  
For it grew dark; but Hoder couch'd his arm.  
And as a spray of hony-suckle flowers  
Brushes across a tired traveller's face  
Who shuffles through the deep dew-moisten'd dust,  
On a May evening, in the darken'd lanes,  
And starts him, that he thinks a ghost went by—  
So Hoder brush'd by Hermod's side, and said:—

'Take Sleipner, Hermod, and set forth with dawn  
To Heim's kingdom, to ask Balder back,  
And they shall be thy guides, who have the power.'

He spake, and brush'd soft by, and disappear'd.  
And Hermod gaz'd into the night, and said:—

'Who is it utters through the dark his hest  
So quickly, and will wait for no reply?  
The voice was like the unhappy Hoder's voice.  
Howbeit I will see, and do his best,  
For there rang note divine in that command.'

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So speaking, the foot-footed Hermod came  
Home, and lay down to sleep in his own house,  
And all the Gods lay down in their own homes.  
And Hoder too came home, distraught with grief,  
Loathing to meet, at dawn, the other Gods:  
And he went in, and shut the door, and fixt  
His sword upright, and fell on it, and died.

250

But from the hill of Lidskalf Odin rose,  
The throne, from which his eye surveys the world;  
And mounted Sleipner, and in darkness rode  
To Asgard. And the stars came out in Heaven,  
High over Asgard, to light home the King.  
But fiercely Odin gallop'd, mov'd in heart;  
And swift to Asgard, to the gate, he came:  
And terribly the hoofs of Sleipner rang  
Along the stony floor of Asgard-streets;  
And the Gods trembled on their golden beds  
Hearing the wrathful Father coming home;  
For dread, for like a whirlwind, Odin came:  
And to Valhalla's gate he rode, and left  
Sleipner; and Sleipner went to his own stall:  
And in Valhalla Odin laid him down.

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But to Brendabink Nanna, Balder's wife,  
Came with the Goddesses who wrought her will,  
And stood round Balder lying on his bier:  
And at his head and feet she station'd Scalds

Scalds] poets and singers.

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Who in their lives were famous for their song;  
These o'er the corpse inton'd a plaintive strain,  
A dirge; and Nanna and her train replied.  
And far into the night they wail'd their dirge  
But when their souls were satisfied with wail,  
They went, and laid them down, and Nanna went  
Into an upper chamber, and lay down  
And Frea seal'd her tired lids with sleep.

And 'twas when Night is bordering hard on Dawn,  
When air is chilliest, and the stars sunk low,  
Then Balder's spirit through the gloom grew near,  
In garb, in form, in feature as he was  
Alive, and still the rays were round his head  
Which were his glorious mark in Heaven, he stood  
Over against the curtain of the bed,  
And gaz'd on Nanna as she slept, and spake

'Poor lamb, thou sleepest, and forgettest thy woe.  
Tears stand upon the lashes of thine eyes,  
Tears wet the pillow by thy cheek, but thou,  
Like a young child, hast cried thyself to sleep.  
Sleep on: I watch thee, and am here to aid.  
Alas! I kept not far from thee, dear soul,  
Neither do I neglect thee now, though dead.  
For with to-morrow's dawn the Gods prepare  
To gather wood, and build a funeral pile  
Upon my ship; and burn my corpse with fire.  
That sad, sole honour of the dead; and thou  
They think to burn, with all my choicest wealth,  
With me, for thus ordains the common rite:  
But it shall not be so. but mild, but swift,  
But painless shall a stroke from Frea come,  
To cut thy thread of life, and free thy soul,

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N



And they shall bury thy corpse with mine, not thee,  
 And well I know that by no stroke of death,  
 Tardy or swift, wouldst thou be leath to die,  
 So it restor'd thee, Nanna, to my side,  
 Whom thou so well hast lov'd; but I can smooth  
 Thy way, and this at least my prayers avail  
 Yes, and I fain would altogether ward  
 Death from thy head, and with the Gods in Heaven  
 Prolong thy life, though not by thee desir'd:  
 But Right bars this, not only thy desire.  
 Yet dreary, Nanna, is the life they lead  
 In that dim-world, in Hela's mouldering realm;  
 And doleful are the ghosts, the troops of dead,  
 Whom Hela with austere control presides,  
 For of the race of Gods is no one there  
 Save me alone, and Hela, solemn Queen.  
 And all the nobler souls of mortal men  
 On battle-field have met their death, and now  
 Feast in Valhalla, in my Father's hall;  
 Only the inglorious sort are there below,  
 The old, the cowards, and the weak are there,  
 Men spent by sickness, or obscure decay  
 But even there, O Nanna, we might find  
 Some solace in each other's look and speech,  
 Wandering together through that gloomy world,  
 And talking of the life we led in Heaven,  
 While we yet liv'd, among the other Gods.

He spake, and straight his linaments began  
 To fade: and Nanna in her deep stretch'd out  
 Her arms towards him with a cry; but he  
 Mournfully shook his head, and disappear'd.  
 And as the woodman sees a little smoke  
 Hang in the air, awhile, and disappear—

So Balder faded in the night away.  
 And Nanna on her bed sunk back, but then  
 From the Mother of the Gods, with stroke  
 Painless and swift, set free her airy soul,  
 Which took, on Balder's track, the way below:  
 And instantly the sacred Morn appear'd.

## II

## JOURNEY TO THE DEAD

From the East, up the ascent of Heaven,  
 Day drove his courser with the Shining Mane,  
 And in Valhalla, from his gable perch,  
 The golden-crested Cock began to crow:  
 Hereafter, in the blackest dead of night,  
 With shrill and dismal cries that Bred shall crow,  
 Warning the Gods that foes draw nigh to Heaven,  
 But now he crew at dawn, a cheerful note.  
 To wake the Gods and Heroes to their tasks.  
 And all the Gods, and all the Heroes, woke  
 And from their beds the Heroes rose, and found  
 Their arms, and led their courses from the stall,  
 And mounted them, and in Valhalla's court  
 Were rang'd; and then the daily fray began.  
 And all day long they there are hack'd and hewn  
 'Mid dust, and groans, and limbs lepp'd off, and blood,  
 But all at night return to Odin's hall  
 Woundless and fresh: such lot is theirs in Heaven.  
 And the Valkyries on their steeds went forth  
 Toward Earth and fights of men; and at their side  
 Skulda, the youngest of the Normen, rode:  
 And over Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,  
 Past Midgard Fortress, down to Earth they came:  
 There through some battle-field, where men fall fast,  
 Their horses fetlock deep in blood, they ride,

And pick the bravest warriors one for death,  
Whom they bring back with them at night to Heaven,  
To glad the Gods, and rest in Odin's hall.

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But the Gods went not now, as otherwhile,  
Into the Tilt-Yard, where the Heroes fought,  
To feast their eyes with looking on the fray.  
Nor did they to their Judgement-Place repair  
By the ash Igdrasil, in Ida's plain,  
Where they hold council, and give laws for men:  
But they went, Odin first, the rest behind,  
'To the hall Gladsheim, which is built of gold;  
Where are in circle rang'd twelve golden chairs,  
And in the midst one higher, Odin's throne.  
There all the Gods in silence ate them down;  
And thus the Father of the Ages spake

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'Go quickly, Gods, bring wood to the seashore,  
With al, which it befits the dead to have,  
And make a funeral pile on Balder's ship.  
On the twelfth day the Gods shall burn his corpse.  
But Hermod, thou, take Sleipner, and ride down  
To Hela's kingdom, to ask Balder back.

So said he; and the Gods arose, and took  
Axes and ropes, and at their head came Thor,  
Shouldering his Hammer, which the Giants know:  
Forth wended they, and drove their steeds before:  
And up the dewy mountain-tracks they far'd  
To the dark forests, in the early dawn;  
And up and down and side and slant they roam'd:  
And from the glens all day an echo came  
Of crashing falls; for with his hammer Thor  
Smote 'mid the rocks the lichen-bearded pines  
And burst their roots; while to their tops the Gods

Made fast the woven ropes, and hal'd them down,  
And lopp'd their boughs, and cleve them on the sword,  
And bound the logs beam: their steeds to draw,  
And drove them homeward; and the snorting steeds  
Went straining through the crackling brushwood down,  
And by the darkling forest paths the Gods  
Follow'd; and on their shoulders carried boughs.  
And they came out upon the plains, and pass'd  
Asgard, and led their horses to the beach,  
And loos'd them of their loads on the seashore,  
And rang'd the wood in stacks by Balder's ship;  
And every God went home to his own house.

But when the Gods were to the forest gone  
Hermod led Sleipner from Valhalla forth  
And saddled him; before that, Sleipner brook'd  
No heavier hand than Odin's on his mane,  
On his broad back no lesser rider bore  
Yet docile now he stood at Hermod's side,  
Arching his neck, and glad to be bestrode,  
Knowing the God they went to seek, how dear.  
But Hermod mounted him, and sadly far'd,  
In silence, up the dark untravel'd road  
Which branches from the north of Heaven, and went  
All day; and Daylight wan'd, and Night came on.  
And all that night he rode, and journey'd so,  
Nine days, nine nights, towards the northern ice,  
Through valleys deep-engulf'd, by roaring-streams:  
And on the tenth morn he beheld the bridge  
Which spans with golden arches Gull's stream,  
And on the bridge a Damsel watching arm'd,  
In the strait passage, at the further end,  
Where the road issues between wailing rocks.  
Scant space that Warden left for passers by:

But, as when cowherds in October drive  
Their line across a snowy mountain pass  
To winter pasture on the southern side,  
And on the ridge a wagon chokes the way,  
Wedge'd in the snow; then painfully the hinds  
With goad and shouting urge their cattle past,  
Plunging through deep untrodden banks of snow  
To right and left, and wain steam fills the air—  
So on the bridge that Damsel block'd the way,  
And question'd Hermod as he came, and said

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'Who art thou on thy black and fiery horse  
Under whose hoofs the bridge o'er Gull's stream  
Rumbles and shakes? Tell me thy race and home.  
But yesternoon five troops of dead pass'd by  
Bounded on their way below to Hela's realm,  
Nor shook the bridge so much as thou alone.  
And thou hast flesh and colour on thy cheeks  
Like men who live and draw the vital air,  
Nor look'st thou pale and wan like men deceas'd,  
Souls bound below, my daily passers here.'

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And the fleet-footed Hermod answer'd her:—  
'O Damsel, Hermod am I call'd, the son  
Of Odin; and my high-roof'd house is built  
Far hence, in Asgard, in the City of Gods:  
And Sleipner Odin's horse, is this I ride  
And I come, sent this road on Balder's track  
Say then, if he hath cross'd thy bridge or no!'

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He spake; the Warder of the bridge replied:—  
'O Hermod, rarely do the feet of Gods  
Or of the horses of the Gods resound  
Upon thy bridge; and, when they cross, I know  
Balder hath gone this way, and ta'en the road

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465 Below there, to the north, toward Hela's realm.  
From here the cold white mist can be discern'd,  
Not at with sun, but through the darksome air  
By the dim vapour-blotted light of stars,  
Which hangs over the ice where lies the road.  
470 For in that ice are lost those northern streams  
Freezing and ridging in their onward flow,  
Which from the fountain of Vergelmoet run,  
The spring that bubbles up by Hela's throne  
There are the joyless-seats, the haunt of ghosts,  
475 Hela's pale swarms; and there was Balder bound  
Ride on; pass free: but he by this is there.'

She spake, and stepp'd aside, and left him-room.  
And Hermod greeted her, and gallop'd by  
Across the bridge; then she took post again.  
480 But northward Hermod rode, the way below  
And o'er a darksome tract which knows no sun,  
But by the blotted light of stars, he far'd,  
And he came down to Ocean's northern strand  
At the drear ice, beyond the Giants' home.  
485 Thence, on his journey'd o'er the beds of ice  
Sall north, until he met a stretching wall  
Barring his way, and in the wall a grate.  
Then he dismounted, and drew tight the girths,  
On the smooth ice, of Sleipner, Odin's horse,  
490 And made him leap the grate, and came within.  
And he beheld spread round him Hela's realm,  
The plains of Nifheim, where dwell the dead,  
And heard the thunder of the streams of Hell.  
For near the wall the river of Roaring flows,  
495 Outmost: the others near the centre run—  
The Storm, the Abyss, the Howling, and the Pain.  
These flow by Hela's throne, and near their spring.



And from the dark flock'd up the shadowy tribes :  
 And as the swallows crowd the bulrush-beds  
 Of some clear river, issuing from a lake,  
 On autumn days, before they cross the sea,  
 And to each bulrush-crest a swail w hangs  
 Swinging, and others skim the river streams,  
 And their quick twittering fills the banks and shores—  
 So around Hermod swarm'd the twittering ghosts  
 Women, and infants, and young men who died  
 Too soon for fame, with white ungraven shields ;  
 And old men, known to Glory, but their star  
 Betray'd them, and of wasting age they died,  
 Not wounds : yet, dying, they their armour wore,  
 And now have chief regard in Hela's realm.  
 Behind flock'd wrangling up a piteous crew,  
 Greeted of none, discomfited and forlorn  
 Cowards, who were in ambushes interr'd alive :  
 And round them still the wattled hardies hung  
 Wherewith they stamp'd them down, and trod them deep,  
 To hide their shameful memory from men.  
 But all he pass'd unhal'd, and reach'd the throne  
 Of Hela, and saw, near it, Balder crown'd,  
 And Hela sat thereon, with countenance stern :  
 And thus bespake him first the Solemn Queen :—

' Unhappy, how hast thou endur'd to leave  
 The light, and journey to the cheerless land  
 Where idly sit about the feeble shades !  
 How dost thou cross the bridge o'er Giall's stream,  
 Being alive, and come to Ocean's shore ?  
 Or how n'erleap the grate that bars the wall ?'

She spake : but down off Sleipner Hermod sprang,  
 And fell before her feet, and clasp'd her knees ;  
 And spake, and mad enreated her, and said :—

' O Hela, wherefore should the Gods declare  
 Their errands to each other, or the ways  
 They go ? the errand and the way is known.  
 Thou know'st, thou know'st, what grief we have in Heaven  
 For Balder, whom thou hold'st by right below :  
 Restore him, for what part fulfils he here ?  
 Shall he shed cheer over the cheerless seats  
 And touch the apathetic ghosts with joy ?  
 Not for such end, O Queen, thou hold'st thy realm.  
 For Heaven was Balder born, the City of Gods  
 And Heroes, where they live in light and joy :  
 Thither restore him, for his place is there.'

He spoke ; and grate repaid the solemn Queen  
 ' Hermod, for he taug'rt, thou son of Heaven !  
 A strange, unlook'd-for, sure, is thing  
 Do the Gods send to me to make them blest ?  
 Small bliss my race hath of the Gods obtain'd,  
 Three mighty children to my Father Lok  
 Did Angerbode, the Giantess, bring forth—  
 Fenris the Wolf, the Serpent huge, and Me :  
 Of these the Serpent in the sea ye cast,  
 Who since in your despite hath wax'd amain,  
 And now with gleaming ring enfolds the world—  
 Me on this cheerless nether world ye threw  
 And gave me nine unlighted realms to rule :  
 While on his island in the lake, afar,  
 Made fast to the bor'd erag, by wile not strength  
 Subdu'd, with limber chains lives Fenris bound.  
 Lok still sustains in Heaven, our Father wise,  
 Your mate, though loath'd, and feasts in Odin's hall,  
 But him too foes await, and netted snares,  
 And in a cave a bed of needle rocks.

' Limber' flexible.

And o'er his visage serpents dropping gall,  
 Yet he shall one day rise, and burst his bonds,  
 And with himself get us his offspring free,  
 When he guides Maspel's children to their bourne.  
 Till then in peril or in pain we live,  
 Wrought by the Gods: and ask the Gods our aid?  
 Howbeit we shroud our day: till then,  
 We do not as some feebler haters do,  
 Seek to afflict our foes with petty pangs,  
 Helpless to better us, or ruin them.  
 Come then; if Balder was so dear belov'd,  
 And this is true, and such a loss as Heaven's—  
 Hear, how to Heaven may Balder be restor'd  
 Show me through all the world the signs of grief:  
 Fools but one thing to grieve, here Balder stops:  
 Let all that lives and moves upon the earth  
 Weep him, and all that is without life weep;  
 Let Gods, men, brutes, bewep him; plants and stones.  
 So shall I know the lost was dear indeed,  
 And bend my heart, and give him back to Heaven.'

She spake; and Hermod answer'd her, and said:  
 'Hela, such as thou say'st, the terms shall be.  
 But come, declare me this, and truly tell:  
 May I, ere I depart, bid Balder hail.  
 Or is it here withheld to greet the dead?'

He spake; and straightway Hela answer'd him:—  
 'Hermod, greet Balder if thou wilt, and hold  
 Convict: his speech remains, though he be dead.'

And straight to Balder Hermod turn'd, and spake:—  
 'Even in the abode of Death, O Balder, hail!  
 Thou hear'st, if hearing, like us speech, is thine,  
 The terms of thy release: hence to Heaven:

595 Fear nothing but that all shall be fulfill'd  
 For not unmindful of thee are the Gods  
 Who see the light, and bled in Asgard dwell;  
 Even here they seek thee out, in Hela's realm.  
 And sure of all the happiest far art thou  
 600 Who ever have been known in Earth or Heaven  
 Alive, thou wert of Gods the most belov'd  
 And now thou artest crown'd by Hela's side,  
 Here, and hast honour among all the dead'

He spake, and Balder utter'd him reply,  
 605 But feebly, as a voice far off, he said:

'Hermod the pious, gild me not my death,  
 Better to live a slave, a captiv'd man,  
 Whom scatters usher in a master's hall,  
 Than be a crown'd king here, and rule the dead  
 610 And now I count not of these terms as safe  
 To be fulfill'd, nor my return as sure,  
 Though I be lov'd, and many mourn my death.  
 For double-murder'd ever was the seed  
 Of Lok, and double are the gifts they give.  
 615 Howbeit, report my message; and therewith,  
 To Odin, to my Father, take this ring,  
 Memorial of me, whether as I or no  
 And tell the Heaven-born Gods how thou hast seen  
 Me sitting here below by Hela's side,  
 620 Crown'd, having honour among all the dead.

He spake, and rais'd his hand, and gave the ring,  
 And with unceasing regard the Queen  
 Of Hela beheld them, and the ghosts stood dumb.  
 But Hermod took the ring, and yet once more  
 625 Kneel'd and did homage to the solemn Queen;  
 Then mounted Sleipner, and set forth to ride

Back, through the astonish'd timber of dead, to Heaven,  
 And to the wall he came, and found the grates  
 Lifted, and issued on the fields of ice;  
 And o'er the ice he far'd to Ocean's strand,  
 And up from thence, a wet and misty road,  
 To the ruin'd Damsel's bridge, and Grail's stream.  
 Worse was that way to go than to return,  
 For him: for others all return is barr'd,  
 Nine days he took to go, two to return;  
 And on the twelfth morn saw the light of Heaven,  
 And as a traveller in the early dawn  
 To the steep edge of some great valley comes  
 Through which a river flows, and sees beneath  
 Clouds of white roiling vapours fill the vale,  
 But o'er them, on the farther slope, descends  
 Vineyards, and crofts, and pastures, bright with sun—  
 So Hermod, o'er the fog between, saw Heaven.  
 And Sleipner snorted, for he smelt the air  
 Of Heaven: and mightily, as wing'd, he flew.  
 And Hermod saw the towers of Asgard rise:  
 And he drew near, and heard no living voice  
 In Asgard; and the golden halls were dumb.  
 Then Hermod knew what labour held the Gods:  
 And through the empty streets he rode, and pass'd  
 Under the gate-house to the sands, and found  
 The Gods on the seashore by Balder's ship.

## III

## FUNERAL

The Gods held talk together, group'd in knots,  
 Round Balder's corpse, which they had hither borne;  
 And Hermod came down towards them from the gate.  
 And Lo! the Father of the Serpent, first  
 Beheld him come, and to his neighbour spake:—

'See, here is Hermod, who comes single back  
 From Hell; and shall I tell thee how he seems  
 Like as a farmer, who hath lost his dog,  
 Some morn, at market, in a crowded town—  
 Through many streets the poor beast runs in vain,  
 And follows this man after that, for hours;  
 And, late at evening, spent and panting, falls  
 Before a stranger's threshold, not his home,  
 With flanks a-trembling, and his slender tongue  
 Hangs quivering out between his dust-smear'd jaws,  
 And piteously he eyes the passers by  
 But home his master comes to his own farm  
 Far in the country, wondering where he is—  
 So Hermod comes to-day unfollow'd home.'

And straight his neighbour, mov'd with wrath, replied:—

'Deceiver, fair in form, but false in heart,  
 Enemy, Mocker, whom, though Gods, we hate—  
 Peace, lest our Father Odin hear thee gibe,  
 Would I might see him snatch thee in his hand,  
 And bind thy carcass, like a bale, with cords,  
 And hurl thee in a lake, to sink or swim,  
 If clear from plotting Balder's death, to swim  
 But deep, if thou devisest it, to drown,  
 And perish, against fate, before thy day.'

So they two soft to one another spake.

But Odin look'd toward the land, and saw  
 His messenger; and he stood forth, and cried:  
 And Hermod came, and leapt from Sleipner down,  
 And in his Father's hand put Sleipner's rein,  
 And greeted Odin and the Gods, and said:—

'Odin, my Father, and ye, Gods of Heaven!  
 Lo, home, having perform'd your will, I come.  
 Into the joyless kingdom have I been,



Below, and look'd upon the shadowy tribes  
Of ghosts, and commun'd with their solemn Queen;  
And to your prayer she sends you this reply:—  
*Show her through all the world the signs of grief,  
Falls but one thing to grieve, there Balder stop.  
Let Gods, men, brutes, browse him, plants and stones.  
So shall she know your loss was dear indeed,  
And bend her heart, and give you Balder back.*

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He spoke, and all the Gods to Odin look'd  
And straight the Father of the Ages said:—

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'Ye Gods, these terms may keep another day,  
But now put on your arms, and mount your steeds,  
And in procession all come next, and weep  
Balder; for that is what the dead desire.  
When ye enough have wept, then build a pile  
Of the heap'd wood, and burn his corpse with fire  
Out of our sight; that we may turn from grief,  
And lead, as erst, our daily life in Heaven.'

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He spoke; and the Gods arm'd: and Odin donn'd  
His dazzling corselet and his helm of gold,  
And led the way on Sleipner: and the rest  
Follow'd, in tears, their Father and their King.  
And thence in arms around the dead they rode,  
Weeping: the sands were wetted, and their arms,  
With their thick-falling tears: so good a friend  
They mourn'd that day, so bright, so lov'd a God,  
And Odin came, and laid his kingly hands  
On Balder's breast, and thus began the wail:—

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'Farewell, O Balder, bright and lov'd, my Son!  
In that great day, the Twilight of the Gods,  
When Muspel's children shall beleague Heaven,  
Then we shall miss thy counsel and thy arm.'

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Thou earnest near the next, O Warrior Thor!  
Shouldering thy Hammer, in thy chariot drawn,  
Swaying the long-hand'd Goats with silver'd rein;  
And over Balder's corpse these words didst say:—

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'Brother, thou dwellest in the darksome land,  
And talkest with the feeble tribes of ghosts,  
Now, and I know not how they prize thee there,  
But here, I know, thou wilt be miss'd and mourned.  
For haughty spirits and high wraths are rife  
Among the Gods and Heroes here in Heaven,  
As among those, whose joy and work is war  
And dally stifes arise, and angry words.'  
But from thy lips, O Balder, night or day,  
Heard no one ever an injurious word  
To God or Hero, but thou kepiest back  
The others, labouring to compose their brawl.  
Be ye then kind, as Balder too was kind  
For we lost him, who smoooth'd all strife in Heaven.'

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He spake: and all the Gods assenting wail'd.  
And Freya next came nigh, with golden tears.  
The loveliest Goddess she in Heaven, by all  
Most honour'd after Freya, Odin's wife;  
Her long ago the wandering Oger took  
To mate, but left her to roam distant lands,  
Since then she seeks him, and weeps tears of gold.  
Names hath she many; Vatadis on earth  
They call her; Freya is her name in Heaven:  
She in her hands took Balder's head, and spate,—  
\* Balder, my brother, thou art gone a road  
Unknown and long, and haply on that way  
My long-lost wandering Oger thou hast met,  
For in the paths of Heaven he is not found.  
Oh, if it be so, tell him what thou wast

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To his neglected wife, and what he is,  
 And wring his heart with shame, to hear thy word.  
 For he, my husband, left me here to pine;  
 Not long a wife, when his unquiet heart  
 First drove him from me into distant lands. 360  
 Since then I vainly seek him through the world,  
 And weep from shore to shore my golden tears,  
 But neither god nor mortal heeds my pain.  
 Then only, Balder, wert thou ever kind,  
 To take my hand, and wipe my tears, and say to— 365  
*Weep not, O Fröya, weep no golden tears!*  
*One day the wandering Oðer will return,*  
*Or thou wilt find him in thy faithful search*  
*On some great road, or resting in an inn,*  
*Or at a ford, or sleeping by a tree:—* 370  
 So Balder said; but Oðer, well I know,  
 My truant Oðer I shall see no more  
 To the world's end; and Balder now is gone;  
 And I am left uncomforted in Heaven.

She spake; and all the Goddesses bewail'd. 375  
 Last, from among the Heroes one came near  
 No God, but of the Hero-troop the chief—  
 Regner, who swept the northern sea with fleets,  
 And rul'd o'er Denmark and the heathy isles,  
 Living; but Ella captur'd him and slew. 380  
 A king, whose fame then fill'd the vast of Heaven,  
 Now time obscures it, and men's later deeds:  
 He last approach'd the corpse, and spake, and said—

'Balder, there yet are many Scalds in Heaven 385  
 Still left, and that chief Scald, thy brother Brage,  
 Whom we may bid to sing, though thou art gone;  
 And all these gladly, while we drink, we hear,  
 Scalds! singers!

After the feast is done, in Odin's hall;  
 But they harp ever on one string, and wake 390  
 Remembrance in our soul of wars alone,  
 Such as on earth we valiantly have waged,  
 And blood, and lancing blows, and violent death—  
 But when thou sangest, Balder, thou didst strike  
 Another note, and, like a bird in spring,  
 395 Thy voice of joyance minded us, and youth,  
 And wife, and children, and our ancient home.  
 Yes, and I too remember'd then no more  
 My danger, where the serpent stung me dead,  
 Nor Ella's victory on the English coast. 400  
 But I heard Thora laugh in Gothland Isle;  
 And saw my shepherdes, Asaaga, tend  
 Her flock along the white Norwegian beach:  
 Tears started to mine eyes with yearning joy:  
 Therefore with grateful heart I mourn thee dead.

So Regner spake, and all the Heroes groan'd.  
 But now the sun had pass'd the height of Heaven,  
 And soon had all that day been spent in wail;  
 But then the Father of the Ages said:—

'Ye Gods, there well may be too much of wail.  
 410 Bring now the gather'd wood to Balder's ship,  
 Heap on the deck the logs, and build the pyre.'

But when the Gods and Heroes heard, they brought  
 The wood to Balder's ship, and built a pile,  
 Full the deck's breadth, and lofty; then the corpse 415  
 Of Balder on the highest top they laid,  
 With Nanna on his right, and on his left  
 Hoder, his brother, whom his own hand slew.  
 And they set jars of wine and oil to leam  
 Against the bodies, and stuck torches near,



Splinters of pine-wood, soak'd with turpentine  
 And brought his arms and gold, and all his stuff,  
 And slew the dogs which at his table fed,  
 And his horse, Balder's horse, whom most he lov'd,  
 And threw them in the pyre, and Odin threw  
 A last choice gift thereof, his golden ring.  
 They fixt the mast, and hoisted up the sails,  
 Then they put fire to the wood; and Thor  
 Set his stout shoulder hard against the stern  
 To push the ship through the thick sand: sparks flew  
 From the deep trench she plough'd—so strong a God  
 Furrow'd it—and the water gurgled in.  
 And the Ship floated on the waves, and rock'd;  
 But in the hull a strong East Wind arose  
 And came down moaning to the sea: first squalls  
 Ran black o'er the sea's face, then steady rush'd  
 The breeze, and fill'd the sails, and blew the fire  
 And, wreath'd in smoke, the Ship stood out to sea.  
 Soon with a roaring rose the mighty fire,  
 And the pile crackled; and between the logs  
 Sharp quivering tongues of flame shot out, and leapt,  
 Curling and darting higher, until they lick'd  
 The summit of the pile, the dead, the mast,  
 And ate the shrivelling sails; but still the Ship  
 Drove on, ablaze, above her hull, with fire.  
 And the Gods stood upon the beach, and gaz'd;  
 And, while they gaz'd, the Sun went land down  
 Into the smoke-wrapt sea, and Night came on  
 Then the wind fell, with night, and there was calm,  
 But through the dark they watch'd the burning Ship  
 Still carried o'er the distant waters on  
 Farther and farther, like an Eye of Fire.  
 And as in the dark night a traveling man  
 Who bivouacs in a forest and the hills,

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Sees suddenly a spire of flame shoot up  
 Out of the black waste forest, far below,  
 Which would not let us sleep, nor rest, nor ease  
 Against the wolves; and all night long it flared  
 So fier'd in the far darkness, Balder's pyre.  
 But fainter, as the stars rose high, it burn'd  
 The bodies were consum'd, ash cover'd the pile:  
 And as in a decaying winter fire  
 A char'd log, falling, makes a shower of sparks—  
 So, with a shower of sparks, the pile fell in,  
 Reddening the sea around, and all was dark  
 But the Gods went by starlight up the shore  
 To Asgard, and sat down in Odin's hall  
 At table, and the funeral-feast began.  
 All night they ate the boar Sæmner's flesh,  
 And from their horns, with silver rim'd, drank mead,  
 Silent, and waited for the sacred Morn.

And Morning over all the world was spread,  
 Then from their leath'd feast the Gods arose,  
 And took their horses, and set forth to ride  
 O'er the bridge Bifrost, where is Hœnir's watch,  
 To the ash Yggdrasil, and Ida's pain:  
 Thor came on foot—the rest on horseback rode.  
 And they found Mumi sitting by his Fount  
 Of Wisdom, which beneath the ash-tree springs;  
 And saw the Nornies watering the roots  
 Of that world-shadowing tree with Honey-dew;  
 There came the Gods, and sat them down on stones;  
 And thus the Father of the Ages said—

Ye Gods, the terms ye know, which Lærmœd brought.  
 Accept them or reject them: both have grounds.  
 Accept them, and they bind us, unfail'ing,



To leave for ever Balder in the grave,  
 An unrecover'd prisoner, shadè with shades.  
 But how, ye say, should the fulfilment fail?—  
 Smoothsound the requir'd right to be fulfill'd;  
 For dost-belov'd was Balder while he liv'd 890  
 In Heaven and Earth, and who would grudge his tears?  
 But from the traitorous seed of Lok they come,  
 These terms, and I suspect some hidden fraud.  
 Reckless ye, Gods, is there no other way?—  
 Speak, were not this a way, the way for Gods? 895  
 If I, if Odin, clad in radiant arms,  
 Mounted on Sleipner, with the Warrior Thor  
 Drawn in his car beside me, and my sons,  
 All the strong brood of Heaven, to swell my train,  
 Should make irruption into Hela's realm, 900  
 And set the fields of gloom ablaze with light,  
 And bring in triumph Balder back to Heaven? "

He spake, and his fierce sons applauded loud.  
 But Frea, Mother of the Gods, arose,  
 Daughter and wife of Odin; thus she said:— 905

"Odin, thou Wh wind, what a threat is this!  
 Thou a creaturest what transcends i y might, even thine.  
 For of al powers the mightiest far-art thou,  
 Lord over men on Earth, and Gods in Heaven;  
 Yet even from thee thyself hath been withhold 910  
 One thing; to undo what thou thyself hast rul'd,  
 For all which hath been fixt, was fixt by thee  
 In the beginning, ere the Gods were born,  
 Before the Heavens were builded; thou didst slay  
 The Giant Ymir, whom the Abyss brought forth, 915  
 Thou and thy brethren fierce, the Sons of Bor,  
 And thrust his trunk to choke the abyssmal void:  
 But of his flesh and members thou didst build

The Earth and Ocean, and above them Heaven:  
 920 And from the flaming world, where Muspel reigns,  
 Thou sent'st and fetch'd'st fire, and modest light,  
 Sun Moon and Stars, which thou hast hung in Heaven,  
 Lavi'ng clear the paths of night and day  
 And Asgard thou didst build, and Midgard, For  
 925 Then me thou mad'st; of us the Gods were born:  
 Then, walking by the sea, thou foundest spars  
 Of wood, and fram'd'st men, who till the earth,  
 Or on the sea, the field of pirates, sail.  
 And all the race of Ymir thou didst drown,  
 930 Save one, Bergemir; he on shipboard flew  
 'I by deluge, and from him the Giants sprang;  
 But a last brood thou hast remov'd far off.  
 And set by Ocean's utmost marge to dwell  
 Bat Hela into Niflheim thou throw'st,  
 935 And gav'st her nine unsighted worlds to rule,  
 A Queen, and empire over all the dead.  
 That empire wilt thou now invade, light up  
 Her darkness, from her grasp a subject rear?  
 Try it; but I, for one, will not applaud  
 940 Nor do I merit, Odin, thou should'st slight  
 Me and my words, though thou be first in Heaven:  
 For I too am a Goddess, born of thee,  
 Thine eldest, and of me the Gods are sprung,  
 And all that is to come I know, but lack  
 945 In my own breast, and have no more reveal'd.  
 Come then; since Hela holds by right her prey,  
 But offers terms for his release, to Heaven,  
 Accept the change;—thou canst no more obtain  
 Send through the world thy messengers; entreat  
 950 All living and unliving things to weep  
 For Balder; if thou haply thus may'st melt  
 Hela, and win the lov'd one back to Heaven."

She spake, and on her face let fall her veil,  
And bow'd her head, and sat with folded hands.  
Nor did the all-ruling Odinn light her word;  
Straightway he spake, and thus address'd the Gods:

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'Go quickly forth, through all the world, and pray  
All living and moving things to weep  
Balder, if haply he may thus be won.'

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When the Gods heard, they straight arose, and took  
Their horses, and rode forth through all the world.  
North south east west they struck, and roam'd the world,  
Entreating all things to weep Balder's death:  
And all that liv'd, and all without awe, wept  
And as in winter, when the frost breaks up,  
A winter's end, before the spring begins,  
And a warm west wind blows, and thaws sets in—  
After an hour a dripping sound is heard  
In all the forests, and the soft-strewn snow  
Under the trees is doubled thick with holes,  
And from the heights the snowbanks shudder down,  
And in fields sloping to the south dark plots  
Of grass peep out amid surrounding snow,  
And widen, and the peasant's heart is glad—  
So through the world was heard a dripping noise  
Of all things weeping to bring Balder back.  
And there fell joy upon the Gods to hear.

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But Hermod rode with Njord, whom he took  
To show him spits and beaches of the sea  
Far off, where some unwear'd might fail to weep—  
Njord, the God of storms, whom fishers know:  
Not born in Heaven; he was in Vanheim rear'd,  
With men, but lives a hostage with the Gods:  
He knows each firth, and every rocky creek

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985 Fung'd with dark pines, and sands where seafowl scream—  
They two roam'd every coast, and all things wept,  
And they rode home together through the wood  
Of Jaravia, which to east of Midgard lies  
Bordering the Giants, where the trees are iron;  
990 There in the wood before a cave they came,  
Where sat, in the cave's mouth, a skinny Hag,  
Toothless and old, who gibes the passers by  
There is she call'd; but now Lok wore her shape:  
She greeted them the first, and laugh'd, and said:

995 Ye Gods, good luck, is it so dull in Heaven,  
That ye come pleasuring to a cow's Iron Womb  
Lovers of change ye are, fastidious sprites—  
Look, as in some boor's-yard a sweet-breath'd cow  
Whose manger is stuff'd full of good fresh hay  
1000 Sniffs at it daintily, and stoops her head  
To chew the straw, her litter, at her feet—  
So ye grow squeamish, Gods, and sniff at Heaven!

She spake; but Hermod answer'd her and said:—  
'Thou, not for gibes we come, we come for tears  
1005 Balder is dead, and Hela holds her prey,  
But will restore, if all things give him tears.  
Begrudge not thine; to all was Balder dear'

But, with a louder laugh, the Hag replied:—  
'Is Balder dead? and do ye come for tears?  
1010 Thou wilt! In eyes we'll weep o'er Balder's pyre  
Weep him all other things, if weep they will—  
I weep him not; let Hela keep her prey!'

She spake; and to the cavern's depth she fled,  
Mocking: and Hermod knew their road was vain  
1015 And as seafaring men, who long have wrought  
In the great deep for gain, at last come home,





And towards evening see the headlands rise  
Of their own country, and can clear the sky  
A fire of wither'd furze which boys have lit  
Upon the cliffs, or smoke of burning weeds  
Out of a till'd field inland;—then the wind  
Catches them, and drives out again to sea  
And they go long days tossing up and down  
Over the grey sea rugosa; and the glimpse  
Of port they had makes bitterer far their toil—  
So the Gods' cross was bitterer for their joy

Then, sad at heart, to Niord Hermod spoke:—  
‘It is the Accuser Lok, who flouts us all  
Ride back, and tell in Heaven this heavy news.  
I must again belove, to Helas realm.’

He spoke; and Niord set forth back to Heaven,  
But northward Hermod rode, the way below.  
The way he knew: and travers'd Gialf's stream,  
And down to Ocean giv'd, and cross'd the ice,  
And came beneath the wall, and found the grate  
Still lifted, well was his return foreknown.  
And once more Hermod saw around him spread  
The joyless plains, and heard the streams of Hel.  
But as he enter'd, on the extreme bound  
Of Nifheim, he saw one Ghost come near,  
Hov'ring, and stopping off, as if afraid;  
Hoder, the unhappy, whom his own hand slew  
And Hermod look'd, and knew his brother's ghost,  
And call'd him by his name, and sternly said

‘Hoder, ill-fated, blind in heart and eyes!  
Why hast thou then to plunge thee in the gulph  
Of the deep inner gloom, but flitest here,  
In twilight, on the lonely verge of Hell,

Far from the other ghosts, and Heas's throne?  
Doubtless thou fearest to meet Balder's woe,  
Thy browest, whom through folly thou didst slay.’

He spoke; but Hoder answer'd him, and said:—  
‘Hermod the nimble, dost thou still pursue  
The unhappy with reproach, even in the grave?  
For thus I died, and fled beneath the gloom,  
Not dally to endure abhorring Gods,  
Nor with a hateful vision of Heaven  
And canst thou not, even here, pass pitying by?  
No less than Balder have I lost the grace  
Of Heaven, and communion with my kin  
I too had once a wife, and once a child,  
And substance, and a golden realm;—I, even  
But all I left of my own act, and fled  
Below, and dost thou hate me even here?  
Balder upbraids me not, nor hates at all,  
Though he has cause, have any cause; but he,  
When that with downcast looks I hither came,  
Stretch'd forth his hand, and, with benignant voice  
‘Welcome,’ he said, ‘if there be welcome here;  
Brother and fellow-sport of Lok with me  
And not to offend thee, Hermod, nor to force  
My hated converse on thee, came I up  
From the deep gloom, where I will now return,  
But earnestly I long'd to never hear,  
Not too far off, when that thou comest by,  
To feel the presence of a brother-God,  
And hear the passage of a home of Heaven,  
For the last time: for here thou comest no more.’

He spoke, and turn'd to go to the inner gloom  
But Hermod stay'd him with mild words, and said:

'Thou doest well to chide me, Hoder blind.  
Truly thou say'st, the planning guilty mind  
Was Lú's; the unwitting hand alone was thine.  
But Gods are like the sons of men in this—  
Which they have woe, they blame the nearest cause.  
Howbeit stay, and be appeas'd, and tell  
Sirs Balder still in pomp by Hela's side,  
Or is he mingled with the unnumber'd dead?'

And the blind Hoder answer'd him and spake—  
'His place of state remains by Hela's side,  
But empty: for his wife, for Nanna came  
Lately below, and join'd him; and the Pair  
Frequent the still recesses of the realm  
Of Hela, and hold converse undisturb'd  
But they too-doubtless, will have breath'd the balm  
Which floats before a virent from Heaven,  
And have drawn upwards to this verge of Hell.'

He spake; and, as he ceas'd, a puff of wind  
Roll'd heavily the leaden mist aside  
Round where they stood, and they behold Two Forms  
Make towards them o'er the stretching cloudy plain  
And Hermod straight perceiv'd them, who they were,  
Balder and Nanna; and to Balder said:

'Balder, too truly thou foresaw'st a scare.  
Lok triumphs still, and Hela keeps her prey:  
No more to Asgard shalt thou come, nor lodge  
In thy own house, Breidablik, nor enjoy  
The love all bear towards thee, nor train up  
Forset, thy son, to be belov'd like thee.  
Here must thou lie, and wait an endless age,  
Therefore for the last time, O Balder, hail!'

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He spake; and Balder answer'd him and said  
'Hail and farewell, for here thou com'st no more.  
Yet mourn not for me, Hermod, when thou art  
1115 In Heaven, nor at the other Gods lament,  
As wholly to be pined quite forlorn  
For Nanna hath comforted me, who, of old,  
In Heaven, was seldom parted from my side,  
And still the acceptance follows me, which crowns  
1120 My former life, and cheers me even here.  
The iron frown of Hela's rear'd  
When I draw nigh, and the wan tribes of dead  
Trust me, and gladly bring for my award  
Their inefficual fends and feeble hates.  
1125 Shadows of life, but they distress them still.'

And the fleet-footed Hermod made reply  
'Thou hast then all the solace death allows,  
Esteem and function: and so far is well.  
Yet here thou liest, Balder, underground,  
1130 Rasting for ever: and the years roll on,  
The generations pass, the ages grow,  
And bring us nearer to the final day  
When from the south shall march the Fiery Band  
And cross the Bridge of Heaven, with Lok for guide,  
1135 And Fenris at his heel with broken chain  
While from the east the Giant Kymr steers  
His ship, and the great Serpent makes to land,  
And all are marshall'd in one flaming square  
Against the Gods, upon the plains of Heaven  
1140 I mourn thee, that thou canst not help as thou.'

He spake; but Balder answer'd him and said—  
'Mourn not for me. Mourn, Hermod, for the Gods.  
Mourn for the men on Earth, the Gods in Heaven,  
Who live, and with their eyes shall see that day

The day will come, when Asgard's towers shall fall,  
 And Odin, and his Sons, the seed of Heaven  
 But what were I, to save them in that hour?  
 If strength could save them, could not Odin save,  
 My Father; and his pride, the Warrior Thor,  
 Vidar the silent, the Impetuous Tyr?  
 I, what were I, when these can naught avail?  
 Yet, doubtless, when the day of battle comes,  
 And the two Hosts are marshall'd, and in Heaven  
 The golden-crested Cock shall sound alarm,  
 And his black Brother-Bird from hence reply,  
 And bucklers clash, and spears begin to pour—  
 Longing will stir within my breast, though vain,  
 But not to me so grievous, as I know,  
 To other Gods it were, in my effort,  
 Absence from fields where I could nothing aid.  
 For I am long since weary of your storm  
 Of carnage, and find, Hermod, in your life  
 Something too much of war and broils, which make  
 Life one perpetual fight, a bath of blood.  
 Mine eyes are dizzy with the arrowy hail;  
 Mine ears are numb'd with blows, and sick for calm.  
 Inactive therefore let me lie, in gloom,  
 Unarm'd, inglorious: I attend the course  
 Of ages, and my late return to light,  
 In times less sick to a spirit mild,  
 In new-recover'd seats, the happier day."

He spake; and the fleet Hermod thus replied—  
 "Brother, what seats are these, what happier day?  
 Tell me, that I may ponder it when gone."

And the ray-crowned Balder answer'd him:—  
 "Far to the west beyond The Blue, there spreads  
 Another Heaven, The Boundless! no one yet

Has reach'd it: there hereafter shall arise  
 The second Asgard, with another name  
 Thither, when o'er this present Earth and Heaven  
 The tempest of a later day hath swept,  
 And every thing shall have been peer'd, and sunk,  
 Shall a new world, at the Gods' repair  
 Hoder and I shall join them from the grave.  
 There re-assembling we shall see emerge  
 From the bright Ocean, at our feet an Earth  
 More fresh, more verdant than the last, with trees  
 Self-sprouting, and a seed of man preserv'd,  
 Who then shall live in peace, as now we war.  
 But we in Heaven shall find again with joy  
 The ruin'd palace of Odin, seats  
 Familiar, halls where we have supped of old;  
 Re-enter them with wonder, never fill  
 Our eyes with gazing, and rebuild with tears.  
 And we shall tread once more the well-known plain  
 Of Ida, and among the grass shall find  
 The golden dice with which we play'd of yore;  
 And that will bring to mind the former life  
 And pastimes of the Gods, the wise discounts  
 Of Odin, the delights of other days.  
 O Hermod, pray that thou mayst join us then!  
 Such for the future is my hope: meanwhile,  
 I rest the thrall of Hela, and endure  
 Death, and the gloom which round me even now  
 Thickens, and to its inner gulph recalls  
 Farewell, for longer speech is not allow'd."

He spoke, and wav'd farewell, and gave his hand  
 To Nanna; and she gave their brother hand  
 Her hand, in turn, for guidance; and The Three  
 Departed o'er the cloudy plain, and soon



Faded from sight into the milder gloom.  
 But Hermod stood beside his drooping horse,  
 Mute, gazing after them in tears: and faint,  
 Faint had he follow'd their receding steps,  
 Though they to Death were bound, and he to Heaven, 135  
 Then, but a Power he could not break withheld,  
 And a stroke which idle boys have trapp'd,  
 And tied him in a yard, at autumn-sees  
 Flocks of his kind pass flying o'er his head  
 To warmer lands, and coasts that keep the sun; 140  
 He strains to join their flight, and, from his shed,  
 Follows them with a long complaining cry—  
 So Hermod gaz'd, and yearn'd to join his kin.

At last he sigh'd, and set forth back to Heaven.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, 1822-88.

## THE YERL O' WATERYDECK

This wind it blows, and the ship it flew,  
 And it was 'Hoy for hame!'  
 but up an' aroose the skipper till his crew,  
 'Haul her oot ower the saut sea faem'

Syne up an' spak the angry king—  
 'Hand on for Dumfrieshoo!'

Quo' the skipper, 'My lord, this maunna be—  
 I'm aing on this boat o' m' o'

He took the helm intil his han',

He left the shore un'er the lee;  
 Syne croodit sail, an', east an' south,  
 Stude awa richt wot to sea.

Quo' the king, 'Lesse-na, jist, I trow!  
 Here lessome il set plan'

15 'Bout sail!' Quo' the skipper, 'Yer grace forgets  
 Ye are lang but o' the lan'.'

Oot he heild to the open sea

Quhill the north wind slaughtered an' foil  
 Syne the east had a bitter word to say

20 That wankent a watery hal.

He turnt her heed intil the north:

Quo' the nobles, 'He's droon, by the mass!'

Quo' the skipper, 'Hand aff yer lady-han's  
 Or ye'll neer see the Bass.'

25 Tho' king creepit dowa the cabin-stair

To drink the gude French wing;

An' up cam his dochter, the princess fair,

An' lukt ower the brine

croodit, crowded. slaughtered, butchered wankent, wankt

She turnt her face to the drizin snaw,  
To the snaw but and the wuet;  
It claucht her snood, an' awa like a clud  
Her hair drave oot i' the elect.

She turnt her face frae the drizin win'—  
'Quha's that aheid?' quo' she.  
The skipper he threw himsel frae the win'  
An' he brayt the helm alee.

'Put to yer han', my lady fair!  
Hand up her heid!' quo' he,  
'Gien she dinna face the win' a wee mair  
It's fairweel to you an' me b'

To the tiler the lady she laud her han',  
An' the ship brayt her cheek to the blast;  
They joutit the berg, but her quarter seraped,  
An' they luskit at inner aghast.

Quo' the skipper, 'Ye are a lady fair,  
An' a princess gran' to see,  
But wat ye a beggar, a man wad sail  
To the heid i' yet company.'

She liftit a pale an' a queenly face,  
Her een flashed, an' syne they swam:  
'An' what for no to the hevin?' she says,  
An' she thurt awa frae him.

Bot she milt na her han' frae the gude ship's helm  
Till the day begouth to daw,  
Ap' the skipper he spak, but what was said  
It was said atween them twa.

but and] and also. claucht] clutched. snood] ribbon worn  
round the hair by unmarried girls. clud] cloud. brayt] brought-  
alee, away from the wind. joutit] dodged. begouth] began-  
daw] dawn.

An' syne the gude ship she lay to,  
Wi' Scotland's hyme un'er the lee,  
An' the king cam d'p the cabin stair  
Wi' wan face an' bleid, or ee

Laird loutit the skipper upo' the deck,  
'Stan' up, stan' up,' quo' the king,  
'Ye're an honest lein' an' beg me a boon  
'Quhan ye gie me back this ring.'

Lownie blew the win', the stars cam oot  
The ship turnt frae the north,  
An' or ever the sun was up an' aboot,  
They wat until the firth o' Forth.

Quhan the gude ship lay at the f'cr heid,  
And the king stude steady o' the lan',—  
'Doon wi' ye, skipper—doon!' he said,  
'Hoo daur ye afore me stan'.'

The skipper he loutit on his knee;  
The king his blade he drew,  
Quo' the king, 'Noo myne ye to couter me,  
I'm aboard my vessel noo.

'Gien I hadna been yer vera gude lord  
'I wad hae thrawn yer neck!  
But—ye wha loutit Skipper o' Doon,  
Rise up Yerl o' Waterydeck.'

The skipper he rasena: 'Yer grace is Great,  
Yer will it an' hower'er long  
Wi' ae wee word ye hae made me a yerl  
'Wi' anither mak me a king.'

hyme] away loutit] lout. lein] fellow. lewar] gently.  
couter] go against. thrawn] twisted. rasena] did not use  
wud] wud. heize] rose up. ding] used.  
p

'I canna mak ye a king,' quo' he,  
 'The Lord alane can do that.'  
 I snook leese-majesty, my man!  
 Onbat the Sathan wad ye be at?'

Glowert at the skipper the doutsun king  
 Jalousin aneth his croon;  
 Quo' the skipper, 'Here is yer Grace's ung—  
 An' yer dochter is my boon!'

The black blade shot intil the king's face—  
 He wadna bonny to see:  
 'The rascal skipper! he lichtles oor grace!—  
 Gar hang him heigh on yon tree.'

Up sprang the skipper an' aboard his ship,  
 Cleekit up a bytm blade  
 An' hackt at the cable that hold her to the pier,  
 An' thought it 'maist ower weel made;

The king he blew shill in a siller whistle;  
 An' tramp, tramp, doot the pier  
 Cam twenty men on twenty horses,  
 Clankin wi' spur an' spear

At the king's fate fell his dochter fair:  
 'His life ye wadna spill!'  
 'Ye daur stan' twint my hert an' my hate!'  
 'I daur, wi' a necht gude will!'

'Ye was aye to yer father a thrawart bairn,  
 But, my lady, here stan's the king!  
 Looka him i' the angry face—  
 A monarch's anither thing!'

snook] snuff. doutsun] doubtful. jalousin aneth] guessing  
 about, with his mind on. lichtles] slights. Cleekit] unclashed.  
 shill] shrill. thrawart bairn] wayward chud.

'I went to my father for his grace  
 Low oir my benaur kner,  
 But I stan' an' look the king i' the face,  
 For the skipper is king o' me.

She turnt, she sprang up' the deck,  
 The cable splashed i' the Forth.  
 Her wings sae bend the gude ship spread  
 And flew east, an' syne flew north

Now was not this a king's dochter—  
 A lady that feared no skath:  
 A warran wi' quilk a warran micht sail  
 Prood intil the Port o' Death?

GEORGE MACDONALD, 1824-1905.

skath:] harm, hurt.



## THE WHITE SHIP

HENRY I OF ENGLAND — 25TH NOVEMBER 1120

By none but me can the tale be told,  
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold,  
*Loras are swayed by a King on a throne.*  
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,  
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.  
*(The sea hath no King but God alone.)*

King Henry held it as life's whole gain  
That after his death his son should reign.

'Twas so in my youth I heard men say,  
And my old age calls it back to-day.

King Henry of England's realm was he,  
And Henry Duke of Normandy.

The times had changed when on either coast  
'Clerely Harry' was all his boast.

Of ruthless strokes fall many an one  
He had struck himself and his son;  
And his elder brother's eyes were gone.

And when to the chase his court would crowd,  
The poor flung ploughshares on his road,  
And shrank: 'Our cry is from King to God!'

But all the chiefs of the English land  
Had knelt and kissed the Prince's hand.

'And next with his son he sailed to France  
To claim the Norman allegiance:

And every baron in Normandy  
Had taken the oath of fealty.

'Twas sworn and sealed, and the day had come  
When the King and the Prince might journey home:

For Christmas cheer is to home hearts dear,  
And Christmas now was drawing near.

Great Fitz-Stephen came to the King,—  
A pilot famous in seafaring;

And he held to the King, in all men's sight,  
A mark of gold for his tribute's right.

'Liege Lord! my father graded the slup  
From whose boat your father's foot did slip  
When he caught the English soul in his grip,

'And cried: "By this clasp I claim command  
O'er every rood of English land!"

'He was borne to the realm you rule o'er now  
In that ship with the anchor carved at her prow:

'And thither I'll bear, as it be my due,  
Your father's son and his grandson too.

'The famed White Ship is mine in the bay;  
From Harfleur's harbour she sails to-day,

'With masts far-peennoned as Norman spears  
And with fifty well-armed mariners.'

Quoth the King: 'My ships are chosen each one,  
But I'll not say nay to Stephen's son.

'My son and daughter and fellowship  
Shall cross the water in the White Ship'

The King yet sail with the eve's south wind,  
And soon he left that coast behind.

The Prince and all his princely show,  
Remained in the good White Ship to go.

With noble knights and with ladies fair,  
With courtiers and sailors gathered there,  
Three hundred living souls we were :

And I Berold was the swiftest hand  
In all that train to the Prince assign'd.

The Prince was a lawless shameless youth ;  
From his father's house he sprang without ruth :

Eighteen years till then he had been,  
And the devil's dues in him were eighteen.

And now he cried : ' Bring wine from below ;  
Let the sailors revel ere yet they row :

' Our speed shall outtake my father's flight  
Though we sail from the harbour at midnight.' "

The rowers made good cheer without check ;  
The lords and ladies obeyed his beck ;  
The night was light, and they danced on the deck.

But at midnight's stroke they cleared the bay,  
And the White Ship furrowed the water-way

The sails were set, and the oars kept tune  
To the double flight of the ship and the moon :

Swifter and swifter the White Ship sped  
Till she flew as the spirit flies from the dead :

As white as a lily glimmered she  
Like a ship's fair ghost upon the sea.

And the Prince cried, ' Friends, 'tis the hour to sing ' "  
Is a songbird's course so swift on the wing ? "

And under the winter stars' still throng,  
From brown throats, white throats, merry and strong,  
The knights and the ladies raised a song.

85 A song—nay, a shriek that rent the sky,  
That leaped o'er the deep—the grievous cry  
Of three hundred living that now must die.

An instant shiver that sprang to the shock  
As the ship's keel felt the sudden rock

90 " 'Tis said that afar—a shudder strange sigh—  
The King's ships heard it and knew not why.

Pale Fitz-Stephen stood by the helm  
Mid all those folk that the waves must whirl.

A great King's fear for the waves to whirl,  
And the helpless pilot pale at the helm !

The ship was eager and sucked athirst,  
By the stealthy stab of the sharp reef pierced

And like the moon round a sinking cup  
The waters against her crowded up.

100 A moment the pilot's senses spun,  
The next he snatched the Prince mid the din,  
Cut the boat loose, and the youth leaped in

A few friends leaped with him, standing near  
' Row ! the sea's smooth and the night is clear

105 ' What ! none to be saved but these and I ?  
' Row row as you've lived ! All here must die.' "

Out of the churn of the churning ship,  
Which the gulf grapples and the waves strip,  
They struck with the strained oars' flash and dip

110 'Twas then, as the splashing broke was' arm  
The Prince's sister screamed to him.

He gazed aloft, still rowing apace,  
And through the whirled surf he knew her face.

To the toppling decks came one and all  
As a fly cleaves to a chamber-wall.

I Berold was clinging anear,  
I prayed for myself and quaked with fear,  
But I saw his eyes as he looked at her

He knew her face and he heard her cry,  
And he said, 'Put back' she must not die

And back with the current's force they reel  
Like a leaf that's drawn to a water-wheel.

'Neath the ship's travail they scarce might float,  
But he rose and stood in the rocking boat.

Low the poor ship leaned on the tide  
O'er the raked keel as she lest might slide,  
The sister toiled to the brother's side.

He reached an oar to her from below,  
And stiffened his arms to clut h her so.

But now from the ship some spied the boat,  
And 'Saved!' was the cry from many a throat.

And down to the boat they leaped and fell  
It turned as a bucket turns in a well,  
And nothing was there but the surge and swell.

The Prince that was and the King to come,  
There in an instant gone to his doom,

Despite of all England's bened knee  
And wange the Norman's fealty.

He was a Priore of last and pride;  
He showed no grace till the hour he died.

When he should be King, he oft would vow,  
He'd yoke the peasant to his own plough.  
O'er him the ships score their furrows now.

God only knows where his soul did wake,  
But I saw him die for his sister's sake.

By none but me can the tale be told,  
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold  
(*Lands are wayed by a King on a tundra.*)

'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,  
Yet the tale can be told by none but me  
(*The sea hath no King but God alone.*)

And now the end came o'er the waters' womb  
Like the last great Day that's yet to come.

With prayers in vain and curses in vain,  
The White Ship sundered on the mid main

And what were men and what was a ship  
Were toys and splinters in the sea's grip

I Berold was down in the sea  
And passing strange though the thing may be,  
Of dreams then known I remember me.

Blithe is the shout on Harfleur's strand  
When morning lights the sails to land  
And blithe is Harfleur's echoing gleam  
When mothers call the children home

And high do the bells of Rouen beat  
When the Body of Christ goes down the street,

These things and the like were heard and shown  
In a moment's trance 'neath the sea alone,

And when I rose, 'twas no sea did seem,  
And not these things, to be all a dream

The ship was gone and the crowd was gone,  
And the deep shuddered and the moon shone.



And in a strait grasp my arms did span  
The manyard rent from the mast where it ran;  
And on it with me was another man.

175

Where lands were none 'neath the dim sea sky,  
We told our names, that man and I.

'O I am Godfrey de l'Aigle bright,  
And see I am to a belted knight.'

'And I am Berold the butcher's son  
Who slays the beasts in Rouen town.'

180

Then cried we upon God's name, as we  
Did drift on the bitter winter sea.

But lo! a third man rose o'er the wave,  
And we said, 'Thank God! us three may He save!'

185

He clutched to the yard with panting start,  
And we looked and knew Fitz-Stephen there.

He lunged, and 'What of the Prince?' quoth he,  
'Lost, lost!' we cried. He cried, 'Woe on me.'

And knosed his hold and sank through the sea.

190

And soul with soul again in that space  
We two were together face to face:

And each knew each, as the moments sped,  
Less for one living than for one dead.

And every still star overhead  
Seemed an eye that knew we were but dead.

195

And the hours passed; till the noble's son  
Sighed, 'God be thy help! my strength's fordone!'

'O farewell, friend, for I can no more!'

'Christ take thee,' I moaned, and his life was o'er

200

Three hundred souls were all lost but one,  
And I drifted over the sea alone.

At last the morning rose on the sea  
Like an angel's wing that beat toward me.

205

Sore numbed I was in my sheepskin coat,  
He f dead I hung, and n'ght nothing more,  
Till I woke sun warmed in a fisher-boat.

The sun was high o'er the eastern brim  
As I praised God and gave thanks to Him.

210

That day I told my tale to a priest,  
Who charged me, till the shrift were raised,  
That I should keep it in mine own breast.

And with the priest I thence did fare  
To King Henry's court at Winchester.

215

We spoke with the King's high chamberlain,  
And he wept and mourned again and again,  
As if his own son had been slain:

And round us ever there-crowded fast  
Great men with faces all aghast:

220

And who so bold that might tell the thing  
Which now they knew to their lord the King?  
Much woe I learnt in their communing.

The King had watched with a heart sore stirred  
For two whole days, and this was the third.

225

And still to all his court would he say,  
'What keeps my son so long away?'

And they said - 'The ports lie far and wide  
That skirt the swell of the English tide;

' And England's cliffs are not more white  
Than her women are, and scarce so light  
Her skies as their eyes are blue and bright ;

' And in some port that he reached from France  
The Prince has lingered for his pleasure ?

But once the King asked : ' What distant cry  
Was that we heard 'twixt the sea and sky ? '

And one said . ' With suchlike shouts, pardie !  
Do the fishers ring their nets at sea . '

And one : ' Who knows not the shrike's quest  
When the sea mew muzzes its young from the nest ? '

'Twas thus till now they had soothed his dread,  
Albeit they knew not what they said :

But who should speak to-day of the thing  
That all knew there except the King ?

Then pondering much they found a way,  
And met round the King's high seat that day :

And the King sat with a heart sore stirred,  
And seldom he spoke and seldom heard.

'Twas then through the hall the King was aware  
Of a little boy with golden hair,

As bright as the golden poppy is  
That the beach breeds for the surf to kiss :

Yet pale his cheek as the thorn in Spring,  
And his garb black like the raven's wing.

Nothing heard but his foot through the hall,  
For now the lords were silent all .

And the King wondered, and said, ' Alack !  
Who sends me a fair boy dressed in black ? '

' Why, sweet heart, do you pace through the hall  
As though my court were a funeral ? '

Then slowly knelt the child at the door,  
And looked up weeping in the King's face .

' O wherefore black, O King, ye may say,  
For white is the hue of death to-day

' Your son and all his fellowship  
Lie low in the sea with the White Ship . '

King Henry fell as a man struck dead  
And speechless still he stared from his bed  
When to him next day my rede I read .

There's many an hour must needs beguile  
A King's high heart that he should smile .

Full many a lordly hour, full fain  
Of his realm's rule and pride of his reign :—

But this King never smiled again .

By none but me can the tale be told,  
This butcher of Rouen, poor Berold  
(*Lands are swayed by a King on a throne*)

'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,  
Yet the tale can be told by none but me,  
(*The sea hath no King but God alone*)

'rede] tale.

## THE KING'S TRAGEDY

JAMES I OF SCOTS: 20TH FEBRUARY, 1437

## Note

[Tradition says that Catherine Douglas, in honour of her heroic act when she barred the door with her arm against the murderers of James the First of Scots, received popularly the name of 'Barlass'. This name remains to her descendants, the Barlass family, in Scotland, who bear for a crest a broken arm. She married Alexander Bequith of Bequith.

A few stanzas from King James's lovely poem, known as *The King's Queen*, are quoted in the course of this ballad. The writer must express regret for the necessity which has compelled him to shorten the text, by adding lines to eight syllables, in order that they might harmonize with our chosen metre.]

I CATHERINE am a Douglas born,  
A name to all Scots dear;  
And Kate Barlass they've called me now  
Through many a waning year.

This old arm 's withered now. 'Twas once  
Most deft 'mong maidens all  
To rein the steed, to wing the shaft,  
To smite the palm-play ball.

In hall adown the close-naked dance  
It has shone most white and fair;  
It has been the rest for a true lord's head,  
And many a sweet babe's nursing-bed,  
And the bar to a King's chamber.

Aye, ladies, draw round Kate Barlass,  
And hark with bated breath  
How good King James, King Robert's son,  
Was foully done to death.

Through all the days of his gallant youth  
The prince, James was pent,  
By his friends at first and then by his foes,  
In long imprisonment.

For the elder Prince, the kingdom's heir,  
By treason's murderous brood  
Was slain; and the father quaked for the child,  
With the royal mortal blood.

At the Bass Rock fort by his father's care,  
Was his childhood's life assured  
And Henry the subtle Bohunbroke,  
Proud England's King, heath the southern yoke  
His youth for long years unured.

Yet in all things meet for a kingly man  
Himself did he approve,  
And the nightingale through his prison wall  
Taught him both lore and love.

For once, when the bird's song drew him close  
To the opened window-pane,  
In her bower beneath a lady stood,  
A light of life to his sorrowful mood,  
Like a lily amid the rose.

And for her sake, to the sweet bird's note,  
He framed a sweeter song,  
More sweet than ever a poet's heart  
Gave yet to the English tongue.

She was a lady of royal blood;  
And when, past sorrow and tears,  
He stood where still through his crownless years  
His Scottish realm had been,  
At Scots were the happy lovers crowned,  
A heart-wed King and Queen.



But the bird may fall from the bough of youth,  
 And the song be turned to moan,  
 And Love's storm-cloud be the shadow of Hate;  
 When the tempest-waves of a troubled State  
 Are beating against a throne.

Yet well they loved; and the god of Love,  
 Whom well the King had sung,  
 Might find on the earth no truer hearts  
 His lowliest swains among.

From the days when first she rode abroad  
 With Scottish maids in her train,  
 I Catherine Douglas won the trust  
 Of my mistress sweet Queen Jane.

And oft she sighed, "To be born a King!"  
 And oft along the way  
 When she saw the homely lovers pass  
 She has said, "Alack the day!"

Years waned,—the loving and toiling years:  
 Till England's wrong renewed  
 Drove James, by outrage cast on his crown,  
 To the open field of feud.

'Twas when the King and his host were met  
 At the leaguer of Roxbro' hold,  
 The Queen and the ladies sought his camp  
 With a tale of dread to be told.

And she showed him a secret letter writ  
 That spoke of treasonous strife,  
 And how a band of his noblest lords  
 Were sworn to take his life.

And it may be here, or it may be there,  
 In the camp or the court," she said;  
 "But for my sake come to your people's arms  
 And guard your royal head!"

Quoth he, "'Tis the fifteenth day of the siege,  
 And the castle's nigh to yield."

"O face your foes on your throne," she cried,  
 "And show the power you wield  
 And under your Scottish people's love  
 You shall sit as under your shield."

At the fair Queen's side I stood that day  
 When he bade them raise the siege,  
 And back to his Court he sped to know  
 How the lords would meet their Liege.

But when he summoned his Parliament,  
 The lowering brows hung round,  
 Like clouds that circle the mountain-head  
 Ere the first low thunders sound.

For he had tamed the nobles' lust  
 And curbed their power and pride,  
 And reached out an arm to right the poor  
 Through Scotland far and wide;  
 And many a lordly wrong-doer  
 By the headman's axe had died.

'Twas then upspoke Sir Robert Grame,  
 The bold o'ermastering man—  
 "O King, in the name of your Three Estates,  
 I set you under their ban!"

"For, as your lords made oath to you  
 Of service and fealty,  
 Even in like wise you pledged your oath  
 Their faithful are to be—"

'Yet all we here that are nobly sprung  
Have mourned dear kith and kin  
Since first for the Scottish Barons' curse  
Did your bloody rule begin.'

With that he laid his hands on his King :—  
'Is this not so, my lords?'

But of all who had sworn to league with him  
Not one spake back to his words.

Quoth the King :—'Thou speakest but for one Estate,  
Nor doth it avow thy gage.

Lest my liege lords hale this traitor hence!'  
The Græme fired dark with rage :—

'Who works for lesser men than himself,  
He earns but a witless wage.'

But soon from the dungeon where he lay  
He won by privy plots,  
And forth he fled with a price on his head  
To the country of the Wild Scots.

And word there came from Sir Robert Græme  
To the King at Edinburgh :—  
'No Liege of mine thou art; but I see  
From this day forth alone in thee  
God's creature, my mortal foe.

'Through thee are my wife and children lost,  
My heritage and lands;  
And when my God shall show me a way,  
Thyself my mortal foe will I slay  
With these my proper hands.'

Against the coming of Christmastide  
That year the King bade call  
At the Black Friars' Charterhouse of Perth  
A solemn festival

And we of his household rode with him  
In a close-ranked company;

145 But not till the sun had sunk from his throne  
Did we reach the Scotch Sea.

'That eve was clenched for a boiling storm,  
'Neath a toilsome moon half seen;

150 The cloud stooped low and the surf rose high,  
And where there was a line of the sky,

Wild wings loomed dark between

And on a rock of the black beach ad,  
By the veiled moon dimly lit,

155 There was something seemed to heave with life  
As the King drew nigh to it.

And was it only the tossing furze  
Or brake of the waste sea-wold?

Or was it an eagle bent to his blast?  
When near we came, we knew it at last  
160 For a woman tattered and old.

But it seemed as though by a fire within  
Her withered limbs were wrung;  
And as soon as the King was close to her,  
She stood up gaunt and strong.

165 'Twas then the moon sailed clear of the rack  
On high in her hallow dome,

And still as aloft with hoary crest  
Each clamorous wave-rang home,  
Like fire in snow the moonlight blazed

170 Amid the champing foam

And the woman held his eyes with her eyes :—  
'O King, thou art come at last,

But thy wraith has haunted the Scotch Sea  
To my sight for four years past.

' Four years 't is since first I met,  
 'Twas the Duchray and the Dow,  
 A shape whose feet clung close in a shroud,  
 And that shape for thine I knew.  
 ' A year again, and on Inchkeith Isle  
 I saw thee pass in the breeze,  
 With the cerecloth risen above thy feet  
 And wound about thy knees.  
 ' And yet a year, in the Link of Forth,  
 As a wanderer without rest,  
 Thou cam'st with both thine arms 't the shroud  
 That clung high up thy breast.  
 ' And in this hour I find thee here,  
 And well mine eyes may note  
 That the winding-sheet hath passed thy breast  
 And risen round thy throat.  
 ' And when I meet thee again, O King,  
 That of death hast such sore drouth,—  
 Except thou turn again on this shore,—  
 The winding-sheet shall have moved once more  
 And covered thine eyes and mouth.  
 ' O King, whom poor men bless for their King,  
 Of thy fate be not so fain;  
 But these my words for God's message take,  
 And turn thy steed, O King, for his sake  
 Who rides beside thy rein.

While the woman spoke, the King's horse reared  
 ' As if it would breast the sea,  
 And the Queen turned pale as she heard on the gale  
 The voice die dolorously.

cerecloth] winding-sheet.

When the woman ceased, the steed was still,  
 But the King gazed on her yet,  
 And in silence save for the wait of the sea  
 His eyes and her eyes met.  
 At last he said:—' God's ways are His own;  
 Man is but shadow and dust.  
 Last night I prayed by His altar-stone,  
 To-night I wend to the Feast of His Son;  
 And in Him I set my trust.  
 ' I have held my people in sacred charge,  
 And have not feared the sting  
 Of proud men's hate,—to His will resign'd  
 Who has but one same death for a hind  
 And one same death for a King.  
 ' And if God in His wisdom have brought close  
 The day when I must die,  
 That day by water or fire or air  
 My feet shall fall in the destined snare  
 Wherever my road may lie.  
 ' What man can say but the Friend hath set  
 Thy sorcery on my path,  
 My heart with the fear of death to fill,  
 And turn me against God's very will  
 To sink in His burning wrath?  
 The woman stood as the train rode past,  
 And moved not limb nor eye;  
 And when we were shipped, she saw her there  
 Still standing against the sky  
 As the ship made way, the moon once more  
 Sank slow in her rising pale;  
 And I thought of the shrouded wrath of the King,  
 And I said, ' The Heaven knows all.'



And now, ye ladies, must ye hear  
 How my name is Kate Barlast;  
 But a little thing, when all the tale  
 Is told of the weary mass  
 Of mirth and woe which in Scotland's realm  
 God's will let come to pass.  
 'Twas in the Charterhouse of Perth  
 That the King and all his Court  
 Were met, the Christmas-Feast being done,  
 For solace and disport.  
 'Twas a wind, wild ere in February,  
 And against the casement-pane  
 The branches smote like summoning hands,  
 And muttered the cliving fan  
 And when the wind swooped over the lilt  
 And made the whole Leaven frown,  
 It seemed a grip was laid on the walls  
 To tug the housetop down.  
 And the Queen was there, more stately fair  
 Than a lily in garden set  
 And the King was loth to stir from her side;  
 For as on the day when she was his bride,  
 Even so he loved her yet.  
 And the Earl of Athole, the King's false friend,  
 Sat with him at the board;  
 And Robert Stuart the chamberlain  
 Who had sold his sovereign Lord.  
 Yet the traitor Christopher Chamber there  
 Would fain have told him all,  
 And vainly four times that night he strove  
 To reach the King through the hall.  
 hilly.

But the wine is bright at the goblet's brim  
 Though the poison lurk beneath;  
 And the apples still are red on the tree  
 Within whose shade may the sadder be  
 That shall turn thy lie to death.  
 There was a knight of the King's fast friends  
 Whom we called the King of Love;  
 And to such bright cheer and courtesy  
 That name might best believe,  
 And the King and Queen both loved him well  
 For his gentle knightliness;  
 And with him the King, at that gay worship,  
 Was playing at the chess.  
 And the King said, (for he thought to joy,  
 And soothe the Queen thereby,)—  
 'In a book 'tis writ that this same year  
 A King shall in Scotland die.  
 'And I have pondered the matter o'er,  
 And thus have I found, Sir Hugh,—  
 There are but two Kings on Scottish ground,  
 And those Kings are I and you.  
 'And I have a wife and a newborn heir,  
 And you are yourself alone,  
 So stand you stark at my side with me  
 To guard our double throne.  
 'For here sit I and my wife and child,  
 As well your heart shall approve,  
 In full surrender and soothfastness,  
 Beneath your Kingdom of Love.'

And the Knight laughed, and the Queen too smiled;  
But I knew her heavy thought,  
And I strove to find in the good King's jest  
What cheer might thence be wrought.

And I said, 'My Liege, for the Queen's dear love  
Now sing the song that of old  
You made, when a captive Prince you lay,  
And the nightingale sang sweet on the spray,  
In Windsor's castle-hold.'

Then he smiled the smile I knew so well,  
When he thought to please the Queen;  
The smile which under all bitter frowns  
Of fate that rose between  
For ever dwelt at the poet's heart  
Like the bird of love unseen.

And he kissed her hand and took his harp,  
And the music sweetly rang;  
And when the song burst forth, it seemed  
'Twas the nightingale that sang

'*Worship, ye lovers, on this May.  
Of this your kalends are begun,  
Sing with us, away, Winter, away!  
Come, Summer, the sweet season and run!  
Awake for shame,—your heaven is won,—  
And anoverly your head, lift all.  
I bid you, that you to his grace doth call!*

But when he bent to the Queen, and sang  
The speech whose praise was hers,  
It seemed his voice was the voice of the Spring  
And the voice of the bygone years.

*"The fairest and the freshest flower  
That ever I saw before that hour,  
The which if the sudden made to start  
The blood of my body to my heart.*

*Alas, are ye a woman, creature  
Of heavenly thing in form of nature?"*

And the song was long, and richly stored  
With wonder and heartsome things;  
And the harp was tuned to every change  
Of minstrel tunings;  
But when he spoke of the Queen at the last,  
Its strings were his own heart-strings.

*"Unworthy but only of her grace,  
Upon Love's rack that's easy and sure,  
In garden of all my love's space  
She took me her humble creature.  
Thus fell my blissful adventure  
In youth of love that from day to day  
Floated me, and further I lay*

*'To reckon all the circum-stance  
As it happened when given gave my care,  
Of my rancour and woful chance,  
It were too long,—I have done therefore  
And of this flower I say no more.  
But unto my help her heart hath tended  
And even from death her man defended'*

*'Aye, even from death,' to myself I said,  
For I thought of the day when she  
Had borne him the news, at Roxbou' siege,  
Of the fell confederacy.*

But Death even then took him as he sang  
 With an arrow deadly bright,  
 And the grinning skull larked grimly aloof,  
 And the wings were spread far over the roof  
 More dark than the winter night.

350

Yet truly along the anxious-song  
 Of Love's high pomp and state,  
 There were words of Fortune's trackless doom  
 And the dreadful face of Fate.

355

And oft have I heard again in dreams  
 The voice of dire appeal  
 In which the King then sang of the pit  
 That is under Fortune's wheel.

*'And under the wheel beheld I there  
 An ugly Pit as deep as hell,  
 That to behold I quaked for fear  
 And thus I heard that who therein fell  
 Came no more up, tidings to tell.  
 Whereat, astound of the fearful sight,  
 I wist not what to do for fright.'*

370

And oft has my thought called up again  
 These words of the changeling song:—  
*'Wist thou thy pain and thy travail  
 To come, well might'st thou weep and wail!  
 And our wail, O God! is long.'*

375

380

But the song's end was all of his love;  
 • And well his heart was glad  
 With her smiling lips and her tear-bright eyes  
 As his arm went round her waist.  
 And on the swell of her long fair throat  
 • Close clung the necklet-chain.

385

## THE KING'S TRAGEDY

235

As he bent her pearl-irised head aside,  
 And in the warmth of her love and pride  
 He kissed her lips full fan.

390

And her true face was a ruddy rose,  
 Like the very red of the rose  
 That doth couch on the happy garden-bed,  
 • In the summer sunlight grows.

395

And all the wondrous things of love  
 That sang so sweet through the song  
 Were in the look that met their eyes,  
 And the look was deep and wise.

'Twas then a knock came at the outer-gate,  
 And the usher sought the King  
 • The woman you met by the Scottish Sea,  
 • My Liege, would tell you a thing,  
 And she says that her present need for speech  
 Will bear no gainsaying.'

400

405

And the King said: 'The hour is late,  
 To-morrow will serve, I woen.'  
 Then he charged the usher strictly and said  
 • 'No word of this to the Queen.'

But the usher came back to the King.  
 • 'Shall I call her back?' quoth he  
 • For as she went on her way, she cried,  
 "Woe! Woe! then the thing must be!"

410

And the King paused, but he did not speak.  
 Then he called for the Venetian-cup  
 And as we heard the twelfth hour strike,  
 There by true lips and false lips alike  
 Was the draught of trust drained up.

415



So with reverence meet to King and Queen,  
To bed went all from the board,  
And the last to leave of the courtly train  
Was Robert Stuart the chamberlain  
Who had to do his sovereign lord.

And all the locks of the chamber-door  
Had the traitor rivet and brast;  
One that Fate might win sure way from afar,  
He had drawn out every bolt and bar  
That made the entrance fast.

And now at midnight he stole his way  
To the moat of the outer wall,  
And laid strong hurdles closely across  
Where the traitors' tread should fall.

But we that were the Queen's bower-maids  
Alone were left behind,  
And with heed we drew the curtains close  
Against the winter wind.

And now that all was still through the hall,  
More clearly we heard the rain  
That clamoured ever against the glass  
And the boughs that beat on the pane

But the fire was bright in the ingle-nook,  
And through empty space around  
The shadows cast on the arras'd wall  
Mid the pictured kings stood sudden and tall  
Like spectres sprung from the ground.

And the bed was light in a deep alcove;  
And as he stood by the fire  
The King was still in talk with the Queen  
While he doffed his goodly attire.

And the song had brought the image back  
Of many a bygone year,  
And many a loving word they said  
With hand in hand and head laid to head,  
And none of us went near.

But Love was weeping outside the house,  
A child in the piteous rain;  
And as he watched the arrow of Death  
He waited for his own shift's close in the sheath  
That never should fly again.

And now beneath the window arose  
A wild voice suddenly  
And the King feared straight, but the Queen fell back  
As for bitter dule to dree,  
And all of us knew the woman's voice  
Who spoke by the Scottish Sea.

'O King,' she cried, 'in an evil hour  
They drove me from thy gate,  
And yet my voice must rise to thine ears,  
But alas! it comes too late'

'Last night at mid-watch, by Aberdeen,  
When the moon was dead in the stars,  
O King, in a death-light of thine own  
I saw thy shape arise

'And in full season, as erst I said,  
The doom had gained its growth;  
And the shroud had risen above thy neck  
And covered thine eyes and mouth.

[dye to dree] fate to endure.

\* And no moan woke, but the pale dawn broke,  
And still thy son stood there:—  
And I thought its silence cried to my son,  
Is the first rays crowned its hair.

480

\* Since then have I journeyed fast and fain  
In very despite of Fate,  
\* Last Hope might still be found in God's will:—  
But they drove me from thy gate.

\* For every man on God's ground, O King,  
His death grows up from his birth  
In a shadow-plant perpetually;  
And thine towers high, a black fest-fire,  
O'er the Charterhouse of Perth! \*

485

\* That room was built far out from the house;  
And none but we in the room  
Might hear the voice that rose beneath,  
Nor the tread of the coming doom.

490

For now there came a torchlight glare,  
And a clang of arms there came;  
And not a soul in that space but thought  
Of the foe Sir Robert Graeme.

495

Yea, from the country of the Wild Scots,  
O'er mountain, valley, and glen,  
He had brought with him in murderous league  
Three hundred armed men.

500

\* The King knew all in an instant's flash;  
And like a King did he stand;  
But there was no armour in all the room,  
Nor weapon lay to his hand

505

And all we women flew to the door  
And thought to have made it fast;  
But the bolts were gone and the doors were gone  
And the locks were riven and brast

510 And he caught the pale pale Queen in his arms  
As the iron footsteps fell,—  
Then loosed her, standing alone, and said,  
\* Our bliss was our farewell. \*

515 \* And 'twixt his lips he murmured a prayer,  
And he crossed his brow and breast;  
And proudly in royal handhood  
Even so with folded arms he stood,—  
The prince of the bloody quest. \*

520 \* Then on me leaped the Queen like a deer:—  
'O Catherine, help!' she cried.  
And low at his feet we clasped his knees  
Together side by side.  
'Oh! even a King, for his people's sake,  
From treasonous death must hide!'

525 \* For her sake most! ' I cried, and I marked  
The pang that thy words could wing,  
And the iron tongue from the chimney-neck  
I snatched and held to the king. —

530 \* Wrench up the plank! and the cant beneath  
Shall yield safe harbouring.

With brows low-bent, from my eager hand  
The heavy heft did he take;  
And the plank at his feet he wrenched and tore;  
And as he frowned through the open floor,  
535 Again I said, \* For her sake! \*

heft] hafe, handle

Then he cried to the Queen, 'God's will be done!'

For her hands were clasped in prayer  
And down he sprang to the inner crypt,  
And straight we closed the plank he had ripp'd  
And taid to smooth it fair

(Alas! in that vault'd gap once was  
Wherethro' the King might have flown.  
But three days since close-walled had it been  
By his will; for the ball would roll therein  
When without at the palm he play'd.)

Then the Queen cried, 'Catherine, step the door,  
And I to this will suffice.'  
At her word I rose and dazed to my feet,  
And my heart was fire and ice

And louder ever the voices grew  
And the tramp of men in mail;  
Until to my brain it seemed to be  
As though I tossed on a ship at sea  
In the teeth of a crashing gale.

Then back I flew to the rest; and hard  
We strove with sinews knit  
To force the table against the door;  
But we might not compass it.

Then my wild gaze sped far down the hall  
To the place of the hearthstone-sill;  
And the Queen bent over above the floor,  
For the plank was rising still.

And now the rush was heard on the stair,  
And 'God, what help?' was our cry:  
And was I frenzied or was I bold?  
I looked at each empty stanchion-hold,  
And no bar but my arm had I!

Like iron felt my arm, as through  
The staple I made it pass  
Alack! it was flesh and bone—no more!  
'Twas Catherine Douglas sprang to the door,  
But I fell back Kate Barlow

With that they all thronged into the hall;  
Half dumb to my falling ken;  
And the space that was but a void before  
'Was a crowd of wretched men.

Behind the door I had fall'n and lay,  
Yet my sense was wildly aware,  
And for all the pain of my shattered arm  
I never fainter there.

Even as I fell, my eyes were cast  
Where the King leaped down to the pit  
And lo! the plank was smooth as its place,  
And the Queen stood far from it.

And under the litters and through the bed  
And within the presses all  
The traitors sought for the King, and pierced  
The arras around the wall.

And through the chamber they ramped and stormed  
Like lions loose in the kin,  
And scarce could trust to their very eyes,  
For behold! no King was there.

Then one of them seized the Queen, and cried,  
'Now tell us, where is thy lord!'

And he held the sharp point over her heart.  
She dropped not her eyes nor in she name  
But she answered never a word.



Then the sword half pierced the true true breast :  
 But it was the Græme's own son :  
 Cried, ' This is a woman, we seek a man !'  
 And away from her girdle zone  
 He struck the point of the murderous steel ;  
 And that foul deed was not done.

And forth flowed all the throng like a sea  
 And 'twas empty space once more ;  
 And my eyes sought out the wounded Queen  
 As I lay behind the door.

And I said, ' Dear Lady, leave me here,  
 For I cannot help you now :  
 But fly while you may, and none shall rock  
 Of my place here lying low.'

And she said, ' My Catherine, God help thee !'  
 Then she looked to the distant floor,  
 And clasping her hands, ' O God help him,'  
 She sobbed, ' for we can no more !'

But God He knows what help may mean,  
 If it mean to live or to die ;  
 And what sore sorrow and mighty moan  
 On earth it may cost ere yet a throne  
 Be filled in His house on high.

And now the ladies fled with the Queen ;  
 And through the open door  
 The night-wind wailed round the empty room  
 And the rushes shook on the floor.

And the bed drooped low in the dark recess  
 Whence the arras was rent away,  
 And the firelight still shone over the space  
 Where our hidden secret lay.

And the rain had ceased, and the moonbeams lit  
 The window high in the wall—  
 Bright beams that on the plank that I knew  
 Through the painted pane did fall,  
 And I gazed with the splendour of Scotland's crown  
 And shield armorial

But then a great wind swept up the stairs  
 And the shining moon fell back,  
 And the royal blazon fled from the floor,  
 And nought remained on its track,  
 And high in the darkened window-pane  
 The shield and the crown were black.

And what I say next I partly saw  
 And partly I heard in sooth,  
 And partly since from the murderers' lips  
 The torture-wrang the truth

For now again came the armed tread,  
 And fast through the hall & fen  
 But the throng was less, and ere I saw,  
 By the voice without I could tell  
 That Robert Stuart had come with them  
 Who knew that chamber well.

And over the space the Græme strode dark  
 With his mantle round him flung,  
 And in his eye was a flaming light  
 But not a word on his tongue.

And Stuart held a torch to the floor,  
 And he found the thing he sought  
 And they slashed the plank away with their swords,  
 And O God ! I fainted not.

And the traitor held his torch in the gap,  
 All smoking and smouldering,  
 And through the vapour and fire, beneath  
 In the dark crypt's narrow ring,  
 With a shout that pealed to the room's high roof  
 They saw their naked King.

Half naked he stood, but stood as one  
 Who yet could do and dare;  
 With the crown, the King was stript away,—  
 The Knight was 'reft of his tattle-arry,—  
 But still the Man was there.

From the rout then stepped a villain forth,—  
 Sir John Hall was his name;  
 With a knife unsheathed he leapt to the vault  
 Beneath the torchlight flame.

Of his person and stature was the King  
 A man right manly strong,  
 And mightily by the shoulder blades  
 His toe to his feet he flung

Then the traitor's brother, Sir Thomas Hall,  
 Sprang down to work his worst,  
 And the King caught the second man by the neck  
 And flung him above the first.

And he smote and trampled them under him,  
 \* And a long month thence they bare  
 All black their throats with the grip of his hands  
 \* When the hangman's hand came there.

And sore he strove to have had their knives,  
 But the sharp blades gashed his hands.  
 Oh James! so armed, thou hadst battled there

Till help had come of thy hands;  
 690 And oh! once more thou hadst held our throne  
 And ruled thy Scottish lands.

But while the King o'er his eyes saw reason  
 With a heart that nought could tame,  
 695 Another man sprang down to the crypt,  
 And with his sword in his hand hard-grapp'd,  
 There stood Sir Robert Grame.

(Now shame on the recreant traitor's heart  
 Who durst not face his King  
 700 Till the bowy unarmed was wred out  
 With twofold combating

Ah! well might the people sing and say,  
 \* As oft ye have heard aight:—  
 \* O Robert Grame, O Robert Grame,  
 Who slew our King, God give thee home  
 705 For he slew him not as a knight.)

And the naked King turned round at bay,  
 But his strength had passed the goal,  
 And he could but gasp:—'Most our is come,  
 But oh! to succour this even soul's doom,  
 710 'Let a priest now shrive my soul!'

And the traitor looked on the King's spent strength,  
 And said:—'Have I kept my word?—  
 Yea, King, the mortal pledge that I gave?  
 No black friar's shift thy soul shall have,  
 715 But the shift of this red sword!'

With that he smote his King through the breast,  
 And all they three in that pass  
 Fell on him and stabbed and stabbed him there  
 Like merciless murderous men.

Yet seemed it now that Sir Robert Graeme,  
Ere the King's last breath was o'er,  
Turned sick at heart with the deadly sight  
And would have done no more.

But a cry came from the troop above —  
"If him thou dost not slay,  
The price of his life that thou dost spare  
Thy forfeit life shall pay!"

O God! what more did I hear or see,  
Or how should I tell the rest?  
But there at length our King lay slain  
With sixteen wounds in his breast.  
O God! and now did a bell boom forth,  
And the murderers turned and fled, —  
"Too late, too late, O God, did it sound, —  
And I heard the true men mastering round,  
And the cries and the coming tread

But ere they came, at the black death-gap  
Somewhere did I creep and steal,  
And lo! for ever I swooned away,  
Through the dusk I saw where the white face lay  
In the Pit of Fortune's Wheel.

And now, ye Scottish marts who have heard  
Dread things of the days grown old, —  
Even at the last, of true Queen Jane  
May somewhat yet be told,  
And how she dealt for her dear lord's sake  
One vengeance manifold.

'Twas in the Charterhouse of Perth,  
In the far-lit Death-chapelle,  
That the slain King's corpse on bier was laid  
With chanter and requiem-knell.

And all with royal wealth of balm  
Was the body purified,  
And none could trace on the brow and lips  
The death that he had died.

In his robes of state he lay asleep  
With orb and sceptre in hand;  
And by the crown he wore on his throne  
Was a kingly forehead spanned.

And, girls, 'twas a sweet sad thing to see  
How the curling golden hair,  
As in the day of the par's youth,  
From the King's crown clustered there.

And if all that came to pass in the brain  
That throbb'd beneath those curls,  
Then Scots had said in the days to come  
That this their soil was a different home  
And a different Scotland, girls.

And the Queen sat by him night and day,  
And oft she knelt in prayer;  
All wan and pale in the widow's veil  
That shrouded her shining hair.

And I had got good help of my hurt  
And only to me some sign  
She made; and save the prayers that were there,  
No face would she see but mine.

And the month of March wore on apace,  
And now fresh warriors fared  
Stull from the country of the Wild Scots  
With news of the traitors snared.



And still as I told her day by day,  
Her pallor changed to sight,  
And the frost grew to a furnace flame  
That burnt her visage white.

And evermore as I brought her word,  
She bent to her dead King James,  
And in the cold ear with fire-drawn breath  
She spoke the traitors' names.

But when the name of Sir Robert Grame  
Was the one she had to give,  
I ran to hold her up from the floor;  
For the froth was on her lips, and soon  
I feared she could not live.

And the month of March wore nigh to its end,  
And still was the death-pall spread;  
For she would not bury her slaughtered lord  
Till his slayers all were dead.

And now of their dooms dread tidings came,  
And of torments fierce and dire,  
And nought she spake,—she had ceased to speak,—  
But her eyes were a soul on fire.

But when I told her the bitter end  
Of the stern and just award,  
She leaned o'er the bier, and thrice three times  
She kissed the lips of her lord.

And then she said,—‘My King, they are dead  
And the knight on the chapel-floor,  
And whispered low with a strange proud smile,—  
‘James, James, they suffered more!’

Last she stood up to her queenly height,  
But she shook like an autumn leaf,  
As though the fire wherein she burned  
Then left her body, and all were turned  
To winter of life-long grief.

And ‘O James!’ she said,—‘My James!’ she said,—  
‘Alas for the woful thing,  
That a poor true and a friend of man,  
In desperate days of bale and ban,  
Should needs be born a King!’

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI, 1828-82.

## GOBLIN MARKET

MORNING and evening  
 Mauds heard the goblins cry :  
 ' Come buy our orchard fruits,  
 Come buy, come buy :  
 Apples and quinces,  
 Lemons and oranges,  
 Pump unpecked cherries,  
 Melons and raspberries,  
 Bloom down checked pouches,  
 Swart-headed mulberries,  
 Wind-free-born cranberries,  
 Crab-apples, rowanberries,  
 Pear-apples, blackberries,  
 A rowan, strawberries :—  
 All up together  
 In summer weather,—  
 Morns that pass by,  
 Fair ever that fly ;  
 Come buy, come buy .  
 Our grapes fresh from the vine,  
 Pomegranates, full and fine,  
 Dates and sharp bullaces,  
 Rare pears and greengages,  
 Damsons and bilberries,  
 Taste them and try :  
 Currants and gooseberries,  
 Bright-fire-like barberries,  
 Figs to fill your mouth,  
 Citrons from the South,

bullaces] wild plums.

## GOBLIN MARKET

30 Sweet to tongue and sound to eye,  
 Come buy, come buy :  
 Evening by evening  
 Among the brookside rushes,  
 Laura bowed her head to hear,  
 Lizzie veiled her blushes  
 35 Crouching close together  
 In the cooling weather,  
 With clasping arms and caressing lips,  
 With tingling cheeks and finger tips.  
 ' Lie close,' Laura said,  
 40 Pricking up her golden head  
 ' We must not look at goblin men,  
 We must not buy their fruits  
 Who knows upon what soil they feed  
 45 Their hungry thirsty roots ?'  
 ' Come buy,' said the goblins  
 Hobbling down the glen,  
 ' Oh,' cried Lizzie, ' Laura, Laura,  
 You should not peep at goblin men.'  
 50 Lizzie covered up her eyes,  
 Covered close lest they should look ;  
 Laura reared her glossy head,  
 And whispered like the restful brook :  
 ' Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,  
 55 Down the glen tramp little men.  
 One hauls a basket,  
 One bears a pail,  
 One lugs a golden-dun  
 Of many pounds weight.  
 60 How fair the vine must grow  
 Whose grapes are so luscious ;  
 How warm the wind must blow

Through those fruit bushes;  
 'No,' said Lizzie; 'No, no, no;  
 Their offers should not charm us,  
 Their evil gifts would harm us.'  
 She thrust a dimpled finger  
 In each ear, shut eyes and ran:  
 Cautious Laura chose to linger  
 Wondering at each merchant man.  
 One had a cat's tail,  
 One whisked a tail,  
 One tramped at a rat's pace,  
 One crawled like a snail.  
 One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,  
 One like a ratel tumbled huffy skurry:  
 She heard a voice like voice of doves  
 Cooming all together  
 They sounded kind and full of loves  
 In the pleasant weather

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Laura stretched her gleaming rack  
 Like a rosh imberided swan,  
 Like a lily from the beck,  
 Like a modish poplar near it,  
 Like a vessel at the launch  
 When its last resound is gone.

85

Backwards up the mossy gien  
 Turned and trooped the goblin men,  
 With their shrill repeated cry,  
 'Come buy, come buy.'  
 When they reached where Laura was  
 They stood stock still upon the moss,  
 Leering at each other,

90

vated Badger.

Brother with queer brother;  
 Signalling each other.  
 Brother with sly brother,  
 One set his basket down,  
 One reared his plate,  
 One began to weave a crown  
 Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts-brown  
 (Men sell not such in any town);  
 One heaved the golden wright  
 Of dish and fruit to offer her:  
 'Come buy, come buy,' was still their cry.  
 Laura stared but did not stir  
 Longed but had no money  
 The wash-tailed merchant bade her taste  
 In tongue as smooth as honey,  
 The cat-faced purr'd,  
 The rat-paced-spoke a word  
 Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard,  
 One parrot-voiced and jolly  
 Cried 'Pretty Goblin' still for 'Pretty Polly,'—  
 One whistled like a lute.

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But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste,  
 'Good folk, I have no coin;  
 To take ware to parloin;  
 I have no copper in my purse,  
 I have no silver either,  
 And all my gold is on the furze  
 That shakes in windy weather  
 Above the rusty heather.'  
 'You have much gold upon your head,'  
 They answered all together.  
 'Buy from us with a golden curl'  
 She clipped a precious golden lock,



She dropped a tear more rare than pearls,  
 Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red.  
 Sweeter than honey from the rock,  
 Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,  
 Clearer than water flowed that juice;  
 She never tasted such before,  
 How should it cloy with length of use?  
 She sucked and sucked and sucked the more  
 Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;  
 She sucked until her lips were sore;  
 Then flung the emptied rinds away  
 But gathered up one kernel soon,  
 And knew not was it night or day  
 As she turned home alone.

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Lizzie met her at the gate  
 Full of wise upbraidings:  
 'Dear, you should not stay so late,  
 Twilight is not good for maidens;  
 Should not loiter in the glen  
 In the haunts of goblin men,  
 Do you not remember Jeanie,  
 How she met them in the moonlight,  
 Took their gifts both choice and many,  
 Ate their fruits and wore their flowers  
 Plucked from bowers  
 Where summer ripens at all hours?  
 But ever in the moonlight,  
 She pined and pined away,  
 Sought them by night and day,  
 Found them no more but dwindled and grew grey;  
 Then fell with the first snow,  
 While to this day no grass will grow  
 Where she lies low:

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I planted daisies there a year ago  
 That never blow;  
 You should not loiter so!  
 'Nay, hush,' said Laura:  
 'Nay, hush, my sister,  
 I ate and ate my fill,  
 Yet my mouth waters still;  
 To-morrow night I will  
 Say more'—and kissed her:  
 'Have done with sorrow,  
 I'll bring you plums to-morrow  
 Fresh on their mother twigs,  
 Cheerer worth getting;  
 You cannot think what figs  
 My recth have met in,  
 What melons, dry-gold  
 Piled on a cash of gold  
 Too huge for me to hold,  
 What peaches with a velvet nap,  
 Pelucid grapes without one seed:  
 Odorous indeed must be the meat  
 Whereon they grow, and pure the water that runs  
 With likes at the brink,  
 And sugar-sweet their sap.'

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Golden head by golden head,  
 Like two pigeons in one nest  
 Folded in each other's wings,  
 They lay down in their curtained bed,  
 Like two blossoms on one stem,  
 Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,  
 Like two wands of ivory  
 Tipped with gold for awful kings  
 Moon and stars gazed in at the

Wind sang them to lullaby,  
 Lumbering-owls forbore to fly,  
 Not a bat flapped to and fro  
 Round their nest  
 195  
 Cheek to cheek and breast to breast  
 Locked together in one nest.

Early in the morning  
 When the first cock crowed his warning,  
 Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,  
 Laura rose with Lizzie;  
 Fetched in honey, milked the cows,  
 Aired and set to rights the house,  
 Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,  
 205  
 Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,  
 Next churned butter, whipped up cream,  
 Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;  
 Talked as modest maidens should;  
 Lizzie with an open heart,  
 Laura in an absent dream,  
 One content, one sick in part;  
 One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,  
 One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came:  
 215  
 They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;  
 Lizzie most placid in her look,  
 Laura most like a leaping flame.  
 They drew the gurgling water from its deep;  
 Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags,  
 Then turning homewards said, 'The sunset flashes  
 Those furthest loftiest crags;  
 220  
 Come, Laura, not another madden lag,  
 No wilful squirrel wage,

225 The beasts and birds are fast asleep,  
 But Laura lingered still among the rushes  
 And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still,  
 The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill.  
 230 Listening ever but not catching  
 The customary cry,  
 'Come buy, come buy,'  
 With its iterated phrase  
 Of sugar-baited words;  
 235 Not for all her watching  
 Once discerning even one goblin  
 Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;  
 Let alone the herd  
 That used to tramp along the green,  
 240 In groups or single,  
 Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, 'O Laura, come;  
 I hear the fruit-call but I dare not look;  
 You should not loiter longer at this break:  
 245 Come with me home.  
 The stars rise, the moon bends her arm,  
 Each glowworm winks her spark,  
 Let us get home before the night grows dark.  
 For clouds may gather  
 250 Though this is summer weather  
 Put out the lights and stretch us through;  
 Then if we lost our way what should we do?

Laura turned cold as stone  
 To find her sister heard that cry alone,  
 255 That goblin cry,  
 'Come buy our fruits, come buy.'

Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?  
 Must she no more such succous pasture find,  
 Gone deaf and band?  
 Her tree of life drooped from the root:  
 She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;  
 But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,  
 Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way;  
 So crept to bed, and lay  
 Silent till Lizzie slept;  
 Then sat up in a passionate yearning,  
 And gnashed her teeth for balked desire, and wept  
 As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,  
 Laura kept watch in vain  
 In sullen silence of exceeding pain.  
 She never caught again the goblin cry:  
 'Come buy, come buy,'—  
 She never spied the goblin men  
 Hawking their fruits along the glen:  
 But when the noon waxed bright  
 Her hair grew thin and grey;  
 She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn  
 To swift decay and burn  
 Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel stone  
 She set it by a wall that faced the south;  
 Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,  
 Watched for a waxing shoot,  
 But there came none;  
 It never saw the sun,  
 It never felt the trickling moisture run;

MICROFILM COPY

While with sunk eyes and faded mouth  
 She dreamed of opelons, as a traveller sees  
 False waves in desert drouth  
 With shade of leaf-crowned trees,  
 And burns the thirstier in the sandal breeze.

She no more swept the house,  
 Tended the fowls or cows,  
 Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,  
 Brought water from the brook  
 But sat down listless in the chimney nook  
 And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear  
 To watch her sister's tankrous care  
 Yet not to share  
 She night and morning  
 Caught the goblins' cry  
 'Come buy our orchard fruits,  
 Come buy, come buy'  
 Beside the brook, along the glen,  
 She heard the tramp of goblin men,  
 The voice and stir

Poor Laura could not bear;  
 Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,  
 But feared to pay too dear.  
 She thought of leave in her grave,  
 Who should have been a bride,  
 But who for joy brides hope to have

And sick and dead  
 In her gay prime,  
 In earliest Winter time,  
 With the first glazing snow,  
 With the first snowfall of gray Winter time



Till Laura dwindling  
 Seemed knocking at Death's door:  
 Then Lizzie weighed no more  
 Better and worse;  
 But put a silver penny in her purse,  
 Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of farze 325  
 At twilight, hanted by the brook:  
 And for the first time in her life  
 Began to listen and look

Laughed every goblin  
 When they spied her peeping:  
 Came towards her bubbling,  
 Flying, running, leaping,  
 Puffing and blowing,  
 Chattering, clapping, crowing,  
 Clucking and gobbling, 335  
 Mopping and mowing,  
 Full of airs and graces,  
 Pulling wry faces,  
 Demure grimaces,  
 Cat-like and rat-like, 340  
 Rascal and wombat like,  
 Snail-paced in a hurry,  
 Parrot-voiced and whistlet,  
 Helter-skelter, hurry-scurry,  
 Chattering like magpies, 345  
 Futturing like pigeons,  
 Gliding like fishes,—  
 Mugged her and kissed her:  
 Squeezed and caressed her.  
 Stretched up their dishes, 350  
 Panniers, and plates:  
 'Look at our apples

Russet and dun,  
 Bob at our cherries,  
 Bite at our peaches, 355  
 Citrons and dates.  
 Grapes for the asking,  
 Pears red with basking  
 Out in the sun,  
 Plums on their twigs, 360  
 Pluck them and suck them,  
 Pomegranates, figs.

'Good folk,' said Lizzie,  
 Mindful of Jeanie  
 'Give me much and many, 365  
 Head out her apron,  
 Tossed them her penny  
 'Nay, take a seat with us,  
 Honour and eat with us.' 370  
 They answered grinning  
 'Our feast is but beginning.  
 Night yet is early,  
 Warm and dew-pearly,  
 Wakeful and starchy 375  
 Such fruits as these  
 No man can carry:  
 Half their bloom would fly,  
 Half their dew would dry,  
 Half their flavour would pass by. 380  
 Sit down and feast with us,  
 Be welcome guest with us,  
 Cheer you and rest with us  
 'Thank you,' said Lizzie, but one waits  
 At home alone for me  
 So without further parleying, 385

If you will not sell me any  
 Of your fruits though much and many,  
 Give me back my silver penny  
 Pressed, you for a fee.  
 They began to scratch their pates,  
 No longer wagging, purring,  
 But wildly demurring,  
 Grunting and snarling  
 One called her proud,  
 Cross-grained, uncivil;  
 Their tones waxed loud,  
 Their looks were evil  
 Lashing their tails  
 They trod and hustled her,  
 Elbowed and jostled her,  
 Clawed with their nails,  
 Barking, mowing, hissing, mocking,  
 Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,  
 Twitched her hair out by the roots,  
 Stamped upon her tender feet,  
 Held her hands and squeezed their fruits  
 Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,  
 Like a lily in a flood,—  
 Like a rock of blue-veined stone  
 Lashed by tides obstreperously,—  
 Like a beacon left alone  
 In a hoary rearing sea,  
 Sending up a golden fire,—  
 Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree  
 Whose with blossoms honey-sweet  
 Sore beset by wasp and bee,—  
 Like a royal virgin town

Topped with gilded dome and spire  
 Close beleaguered by a fleet  
 Mad to tug her standard down,

One may lead a horse to water,  
 Twenty cannot make him drink,  
 Though the goblins cuffed and laughed her,  
 Coaxed and fought her,  
 Bullied and besought her,  
 Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,  
 Kicked and knucked her,  
 Mauled and mocked her,  
 Lizzie uttered not a word,  
 Would not open lip from lip  
 Lest they should cram a mouthful in;  
 But laughed in heart to feel the grip  
 Of juice that syrrupped all her face,  
 And lodged in dimples of her chin,  
 And streaked her neck which quaked like eard.  
 At last the evil people  
 Worn out by her resistance  
 Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit  
 Along whichever road they took,  
 Not leaving root or stone or shoot;  
 Some waded into the ground,  
 Some dived into the brook  
 With ring and ripple,  
 Some scudded on the gale without a sound,  
 Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle,  
 Lizzie went her way;  
 Knew not was it night or day;  
 Sprang up the back, tore thro' the furze,

Threaded copsis and dingle,  
 And heard her penny jingle  
 Bouncing in her purse,  
 Its bonnie was-music to her ear  
 She ran and ran 455  
 As if she feared some goblin man  
 Dogged her with gibber or curse  
 Or something worse :  
 But not one goblin scurried after,  
 Nor was she pricked by fear ; 460  
 The kind heart made her windy-paced  
 That urged her home quite out of breath with haste  
 And inward laughter.

"  
 She cried ' Laura,' up the garden,  
 ' Did you miss me ?' 465  
 Come and kiss me.  
 Never mind my bruises,  
 Hag me, kiss me, suck my juices  
 Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,  
 Goblin pulp and goblin dew. 470  
 Eat me, drink me, love me;  
 Laura, make much of me :  
 For your sake I have braved the glen  
 And had to do with goblin merchant men.'

Laura started from her chair,  
 Flung her arms up in the air,  
 Clutched her hair :  
 ' Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted  
 For my sake the fruit forbidden ?  
 Must your light like mine be hidden, 475  
 Your young life like mine be wasted,  
 Undone in mine undoing

And turned in my run,  
 'Thirsty, unkered, goblin maiden ?'  
 485 She clung about her sister,  
 Kissed and kissed and kissed her :  
 Tears once again  
 Refreshed her shrunken eyes,  
 Dropping like rain  
 490 After long sultry drought,  
 Shaking with aguish fear and pain,  
 She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth

Her lips began to scorch,  
 That juice was wormwood to her tongue,  
 495 She loathed the feast :  
 Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sang,  
 Rent all her robe, and wrung  
 Her hands in lamentable haste,  
 And wrat her breast  
 500 Her locks streamed like the torch  
 Burnt by a racer at full speed,  
 Or like the mane of horses in their flight,  
 Or like an eagle when she stems the light  
 Straight toward the sun,  
 505 Or like a caged thing freed,  
 Or like a flying flag when armies run

Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her  
 heart,  
 Met the fire smouldering there  
 And overbore its lesser flame ;  
 510 She gorged on bitterness without shame :  
 Ah ! fool, to choose such part  
 Of soul-consuming care.  
 Sense failed in the mortal strife :



Like the watch tower of a town  
Which an earthquake shatters down,  
Like a lightning-stricken mast,  
Like a wind-uprooted tree  
Spun about,  
Like a foam-topped waterspout  
Cast down headlong in the sea,  
She fell at last;  
Pleasure past and anguish past,  
Is it death or is it life?

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Life out of death,  
That night long Lizzie watched by her,  
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,  
Felt for her breath,  
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face  
With tears and fanning leaves:  
But when the first birds chirped about their eaves,  
And early reapers plodded to the place  
Of golden sheaves,  
And dew-wet grass  
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,  
And new buds with new day  
Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,  
Laura awoke as from a dream,  
Laughed in the innocent old way,  
Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice;  
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of grey,  
Her breath was sweet as May  
And light danced in her eyes,

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Days, weeks, months, years  
Afterwards, when both were wives  
With children of their own;

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Their mother-hearts set with fears,  
Their lives bound up in tender ties;  
Laura would call the little ones  
And tell them of her early prime,  
Those pleasant days long-gone  
Of not-returning times:  
Would talk about the haunted glen,  
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,  
Their fruits like honey to the throat  
But poison in the blood,  
(Men sell not such in any town)  
Would tell them how her sister stood  
In deadly peril to do her good,  
And won the fiery antidote  
Then joining hands to little hands  
Would bid them cling together,  
'For there is no friend like a sister  
In calm or stormy weather,  
To cheer one on the tedious way,  
To fetch one if one goes astray,  
To lift one if one totters down,  
To strengthen whilst one stands.'

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CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI, 1830-94

## JUDAS ISCARIOT'S PARADISE

*De Sancto Brendano Faro Finloch*

*Qui descendunt mare in navibus,*

'Tis David the Prophet who speaketh thus,

*Vident opera Domini :—*

And lo, forthwith he telleth us why ;

For skyward up with verdant sweep,

Then down they are borne to the yawning deep ;—

Therefore he that hath sailed in a ship can tell

Of the things of Heaven and things of Hell.

Saint Brendon, Abbot of Inisfail,

Listened, we read, and wept at the tale

That was told in his cell by Beryn the sage,

Of Mernoc his godson's pilgrimage :

How he sailed and sailed far away to the East,

'Till he came to the land of the Lord's behest,

The promised land of the Saints, that lies

Full in front of the Gates of Paradise,

Where Enoch waits for the days of Doom

With Elias alone 'till the Lord shall come ;—

A land of glory and life and light,

Where never is storm, nor winter, nor night,

And the air with holy wings astir,

Breathes bridal incense of balm and myrrh,

And the strands are of ruby and diamond,

With fluffs of the virgin gold beyond,

Cloven by streams from the sheeny glades

Of fair palm copses and cedarn shades,

Where the herbs are all flower and the trees all fruit—

Heaven over the head, heaven under the foot—

## JUDAS ISCARIOT'S PARADISE

259

Where the summers fly so swift, so sweet,  
So happy that none may feel them fleet,  
And the child might change to the dotard gray  
Ere its weaned he had dwelt there a single day.

And Brendon the Abbot heard and wept—

And lo that night by his couch as he slept,

Stood one with wings, who looked to the North,  
And pointed two fingers, and bade—“Go forth!”

And the Saint arose, and two by two,

He called twelve brothers, trusty and true ;

And, “Brothers,” he said, “will ye sail with me,

For the love of God and His dear Lady?”

And, “Father,” they answered, “all earthly good

We have left for His sake who died on rood,

Master art thou, and captain, and friend—

We will sail with thee to the Mid-world's End.”

And they prayed evermore, and kept a fast,

With penance, till forty days were past,

And dight their ship with tackle and gear,

And sails and anchor and beams to steel,

And seven years' provender, wine, and bread,

And prayed and toiled till the whole was sped,

And lo, as they marched with banners before,

And *Dominus disce* forth to the shore,

Two brethren knelt and prayed by the road—

“Let us sail with you for the love of God.”

And the Abbot said, “Yes, ye may sail with us,

Since Christ the Father ordaineth it thus :

Yet, mark of ye twain, there is one shall die—

Ere the bark turn homeward, alive to the Pit.”

So forth they sailed whither God might send,  
 Were it even to fare to the Mid-world's End.  
 And the wind blew fair and the waves rolled right,  
 And they trusted in God and their hearts were light.

Now the marvels they met on the yeasty deep—  
 Of the fiends and fish, and the Land of Sheep,  
 And the fruits and the flowers and gems therein;  
 Of the Worms of the world, light Iascomyn,  
 Who wrestles and gnashes ever again  
 To grasp his tail in his teeth in vain,  
 So huge, that the manners landed awhile  
 On the ridge of his spine, and deemed it an isle,  
 Till they lit them a fire, and felt it creep  
 And shudder and shrink to the whirling deep;  
 On the Paradise isle, where the soft wing-beat  
 Of God's wite fowl maketh music sweet,  
 Of the wondrous stead in the summer sea,  
 Where the sharks lie slumbering peacefully,  
 Shoaled as close as the drifted snow,  
 Like a float on the hidden strands below,  
 Of beast, and man, and vision divine,  
 And peril, and tempest, and holy sign;  
 Of lands and seas in a world unknown,  
 And all that they saw betwixt zone and zone,  
 I pass to tell for the time would fail  
 Ere complines may to finish the tale.  
 But to prove that the Psalmist's words be true  
 When he saith in my text that the manner crew  
 Both mount to Heaven and sink to Hell,  
 Ye shall hear how the same to the Saint befell.

*Incipit de Juda Iscariote.*

Mightily ever the South wind blew,  
 And North, ever North, the good ship drew  
 With the holy Brandon, and Brandon's crew.

North, ever North, till a glimmering-dun  
 That lighted the icebergs, one by one,  
 Was all they knew of the noon-day sun

On, through the darkness, and mist and snow,  
 Or a grisly moonlight, that served to show  
 How the sea snakes writhed in the deep below

They heard, in the night, the icebulks crash  
 With a thundering shock, and grind, and gnash,  
 And the waves huss back with a scathing splash.

Nor anchor was cast, nor sail was furled,  
 Till they neared and saw where the fringe of the world  
 Its arrows of flame through the weakin hurled.

And at Christmas, so near as they could count,  
 They came to an isle where a mighty mount  
 Spouted fire and smoke in a blazing fount.

Full many a mile there was smoke on the sea,  
 And the blaze ever leapt to the cloudcasks free,  
 Rumbling and belching hideously.

And one cried, 'Satanas call—farewell!  
 For yonder mount is the mouth of Hell!  
 And they saw him no more, but heard fiends yell.

And northward still, on that Christmas Day  
 They fared, till they saw where an iceberg lay  
 On the left, and the Saint bade steer that way.



And they saw One, naked, sit on a stone,  
Worn by the waves to sinew and bone,  
Wringing his hands with a dolorous moan.

A long loose cloth was thonged by his chin,  
That flapped in the wind on his wet bare skin,  
And ox tongues two were tied to his shin.

And now in the wave, and now in the wind,  
Drenched, and pinched, and beaten, and blind,  
The wretch ever sat on his stone and pined.

And the Saint said, 'Speak, be thou man or ghost,  
And tell what thou art, for a thing so lost  
Never greeted I yet by wave or coast !'

And he answered :—' I, ere I went to pain,  
Was the Lord's Iscariot chamberlain,  
Judas, who sold the Christ for gain !'

Then the shipmates all were aghast for fear,  
But the good Saint bade cast anchor near,  
And asked of the ghost : ' What dost thou here ?'

And Judas answered : ' By Christ's dear grace  
This day am I loosed from mine own due place  
With Herod and Pilate and Calaphas ,

' For He whom the Gates of the Hells obey  
Each winter hath granted me here to stay  
From Christmas Eve for a night and a day.

' And this is my Paradise, here alone  
To sit with my cloth and tongue and stone,  
The sole three things in the world mine own.

' This cloth I bought from the Lord's privy purse,  
But gave to a leper.—It hath this curse,  
That it beats on my skin, but it saves from worse.

' These tongues I gave to the poor for meat  
In the name of Christ,—and the fish that eat  
Thereon as they list, forbear my feet.

' This stone I found by a road where it lay  
And set for a step in a mury way,  
Therefore sit I on stone, not ice, this day !'

Then a rout of Fiends came flying again  
With a roar and a rush like a hurricane  
To bear the Iscariot back to pain.

But their might was naught, for the Saint was nigh,  
And round and round with a ghastly cry  
And clapping of wings they flew harmless by.

' Flee hence, flee hence !' they howled and hissed :  
' Already in Hell is its darling missed !'

Wilt thou save the traitor who sold the Christ ?'

And the Saint said, ' Nay, my might is none,  
But if Jesus will, that ye leave him alone  
For another night, God's will be done !'

And they screamed and fled to their Hell once more.  
And Judas thanked Brandon o'er and o'er  
So piteously that all wept sore,

And they hid there through the dreary night,  
And they knew 't was morn by a fiendish flight  
And the shriek as they fled of a tortured spirit.

And mightily, lo, the North Wind blow,  
And South, ever South, the good ship drew  
With the holy Brandon and Brandon's crew.

*Explicit de Juda Iscariota.*

In a year and a day Saint Brandon's sail  
 Was furled in the harbour of Inistart,  
 And merely thronged the brotherhood all,  
 Sacristan, Cellarer great and small,  
 With welcome of laughter and welcome of tears  
 For the manner Saint and his holy peers.  
 And huge was the feasting far and wide  
 Through the minster lanes that Christmastide,  
 And the Saint sat at meat on the twelfth Yule-day,  
 And spake of the sea and the perilous way,  
 And told, with the rest, of the rock of ice,  
 And Judas Iscariot's Paradise;  
 And how for a night they had anchored by,  
 Lest the fiends who waited and watched should spy.

And the Sacristan spake: " 'Twas the very morn  
 Next after the day that Christ was born,  
 As I stepped in the gloaming to toll the bell  
 For matins, behold, I stumbled and fell,  
 With a broken shin and all arm bruised sore,  
 On an anchor that hung by the chapel door.  
 And I shouted, and lo, at the noise of my shout,  
 The half-clad brotherhood ran starting out;  
 And there as we stood in a scared suspense,  
 A cable, that hung from none, knew whence,  
 Hauled the anchor again up into the sky,  
 And we deemed that we heard thy shipmates cry!"

And Saint Brandon answered: "It well may be,  
 For I deem that we sailed in that upper sea  
 Of waters which Moyses saith were pent  
 At the first e'er-arching firmament  
 For the firmament standeth fast, we know,  
 'Twixt the waters above and the waters below;

And, certes, above the sphere of the sun  
 We sailed that voyage, for day was none,  
 Save a glimmer of grey in the misty air,  
 Though I marvel much how the moon came there.

Yet beware how ye seek too curiously  
 To fathom Great on a mystery;  
 For Science, ye know, is the cup that is yearned  
 By human Pride to the great Arch-Island,  
 But Faith, an Angel born in the shine  
 Of the child-like heart, by a grace Divine!  
 Wherefore pray ye for faith, and the God of Love,  
 After life's strange voyage, give rest above.  
*Ut in eternali gaudia*  
*Benedicamus, Dominus*"

AMEN

SEBASTIAN EVANS, 1830-1909.

## CONCERNING GEFFRAY TESTE NOIRE

And if you meet the Canon of Chiray,  
As going to Ortaise, you well may do,  
Greet him from John of Castel Neuf, and say,  
All that I tell you, for all this is true.

This Geffray Teste Noir was a Gascon thief,  
Who, under shadow of the English name,  
Pilled all such towns and countries as were his  
To King Charles and St. Dennis; thought it blame

If anything escaped him; so my lord,  
The Duke of Berry sent Sir John Bonne Lance,  
And other knights, good players with the sword,  
To check this thief, and give the land a chance.

Therefore we set our bastides round the tower  
That Geffray held, the strong thief; like a king,  
High perch'd upon the rock of Ventadour,  
Hopefully strong by Christ! it was mid spring,

When first I joined the little army there  
With ten good spears; Auvergne is hot, each day  
We sweated armed before the banner,  
Good feats of arms were done there often—eh?

Your brother was slain there? I mind me now,  
A right good man-at-arms, God pardon him!  
I think 'twas Geffray smote him on the brow  
With some spiked axe, and while he totter'd, dim

Pilled] Robbed.      bastide] temporary hut or tower erected for  
defensive purposes.

## CONCERNING GEFFRAY TESTE NOIRE 277

About the eyes, the spear of Alleyne Roux  
Slipped through his gambells and his throat; well, well,  
Alleyne is paid now; your name Alleyne too?  
Mary! how strange—but this tale I would tell—

For spite of all our bastides, damned Blackhead  
Would ride ahead whenever he chose to ride,  
We could not stop him; many a burgher bled  
Dear gold all round his girdle; far and wide

The vineyard dwellers in utter misery  
Twist up and thief Sir Geffray; hauled this way  
By Sir Bonne Lance at one time, he gone by,  
Down comes this Teste Noir on another day

And therefore they dig up the stone, grind corn,  
Hew wood, draw water, yea, they lived, in short,  
As I said just now, utterly forlorn,  
Till this our knave and blackhead was out-fought.

So Bonne Lance fretted, thinking of some trap  
Day after day, till on a time he said  
"John of Newcastle, if we have good hap,  
We catch our thief in two days." "How?" said

"Why, Sir, to-day he rideth out again,  
Hoping to take with certain sumpter mules  
From Carcassonne, going with little train,  
Because, forsooth, he thinketh us mere fools;

"But if we set an ambush in some wood,  
He is but dead; so, Sir, take thirty spears  
To Vernille forest; if it seem you good."  
Then felt I like the horse in Job, who hears.

gambells] piece of chain mail armour attached to the head-pieces  
and protecting the neck.



The dancing trumpet sound, and we went forth;  
 And my red lion on the spear-head flapped,  
 As faster than the cool wind we rode North,  
 Towards the wood of Verville; thus it happened.

We rode a soft space on that dry white spire  
 Got news about Sir Guffray; the red wine  
 Under the road-side bush was clear; the flies,  
 The dragon-flies I made me most, day after

In brighter arms than ever I put on;  
 So—'Guffray,' said our spies, 'would pass that way  
 Next day at sundown; then he must be won;  
 And so we enter'd Verville wood next day,

In the afternoon; through it the highway runs,  
 'Twixt copses of green hazel, very thick,  
 And underneath, with glimmering of suns,  
 The pinnaces are happy; the dewy licks

The stiff green moss. 'Put cloths about your arms  
 Lest they should glitter; surely they will go  
 In a long, thin line, watchful for alarms,  
 With all their carriages of boots, so—

'Lay down my pennon in the grass—Lord God!  
 What have we lying here? will they be cold,  
 I wonder, being so bare, above the sod,  
 Instead of under? This was a knight too, fold

'Lying on fold of ancient rusted mail,  
 No plate at all, gold zowels to the spurs,  
 And see the quiet gleam of turquoise pale  
 Along the scinture; but the long time blurs

scinture] girdle.

'Even the tinder of his coat to nought;  
 Except these scraps of leather, see how white  
 The skull is, loose within the coffin! He fought  
 A good fight, maybe, ere he was slain quite

'No armour on the legs too; strange in faith—  
 A little skeleton for a knight though—ah,  
 This one is bigger, truly without scathe  
 His enemies escaped none—this driven out far,—

'That must have reach'd the heart, I doubt—how now,  
 What say you, Andovrand—a woman? why?  
 'Under the roof a gold wreath on the brow,  
 Yes, see the hair not gone to powder, we,

'Golden, no doubt, once—yea, and very small—  
 Thus for a knight; but for a dame my lord,  
 These loose-hung bones seem shapely still, and tall,  
 Didst ever see a woman's bones, my lord?

Often, God help me! I remember when  
 I was a simple boy, fifteen years old,  
 The Jacques froze up the blood of men  
 With their fell deeds, not fit now to be told;

God help again! we enter'd Beauvais town,  
 Slaying them fast, whereas I help'd, mere boy  
 As I was then; we gentles cut them down,  
 These burners and defilers, with great joy

Reason for that, too, in the great church there  
 These fiends had lit a fire, that soon went out,  
 The church at Beauvais being so great and fair—  
 My father, who was by me, gave a shout

out] head covering.

Between a beast's howl and a woman's scream,

Then, panting, chuckled to me: 'John, look! look! 170

Count the dames' skeletons! From some bad dream

Like a man just awaked, my father shook;

And I, being faint with smelling the burnt bones,

And very hot with fighting down the street,

And sick or such a life fell down, with groans 175

My head went weak y nodding to my feet

An arrow had gone through her tender throat,

And her right wrist was broken; then I saw

The reason why she had on that war-coat,

Their story came out clear with at a flash, 180

For when he knew that they were being waylaid,

He threw it over her, yea, he and an,

When by he was rough hack'd, while they were stay'd

By those their murderers, many an one did fall

Beneath his arm, no doubt, so that he clear'd 185

Their circle, bore his death wound out of it;

But as they rode, some ascher least afar'd

Drew a strong bow, and thereby she was hit.

So as he rode he knew not she was dead,

Thought her but fainted from her broken wrist, 190

He bound with his great leathern belt—she bled?

Woe knows! he bled too, nee her was there miss'd

The beating of her heart, his heart beat well

For both of them, till here, within this wood,

He died scarce sorry, easy this to tell, 195

After these years the flowers forget their blood.—

# CONCERNING GILFRAY TESTIF N DRE 281

How could it be? never before that day,

However much a soldier-I might be,

Could I look on a skeleton and say

140 I care not for it, shudder not—now see,

Over those bones I sat and pored for hours,

And thought, and dream'd, and still I scarer could see

The small white bones that lay upon the flowers,

But evermore I saw the lady, she

145 With her dear gentle walking leading in,

By a chain of silver twined about her wrists,

Her loving knight, mounted and arm'd to win

Great honour for her, fighting in the lists.

O most pale face, that brings such joy and sorrow

150 Into men's hearts—yea, too, so pierc'd by sharp

That joy is, that it marcheth nigh to sorrow

For ever—like an overwinded harp.

Your face must hurt me always; pray you now,

Doth it not hurt you too? seemeth some pain

155 'To hold you always, pain to hold your brow

So smooth, unwrinkled ever; yea again,

Your long eyes where the lids seem like to drop,

Would you not, lady, were they shot fast, for

Far swifter? there so high they will not stop,

160 They are most sly to glide forth and a stea

Into my heart, I know the soft lid there,

And in green garraen scarce can stop my eyes

From wondering on your face, but that your hair

Falls down and tangles me, back my eye right,

Or say your mouth—I saw you drink red wine  
Once at a feast; how slowly it sank in,  
As though you fear'd that some wild fate might twine  
Within that cup, and slay you for a sin,

And when you talk your lips do arch and move,  
In such wise that a language new I know  
Besides their sound; they quiver, too, with love,  
When you are standing silent; know this, too,

I saw you kissing once, like a carved sword  
That bites with all its edge, did your lips lie,  
Curled gently, slowly, long-time could afford  
For caught-up breathings; like a dying sigh

They gather'd up their lines and went away,  
And still kept twitching with a sort of smile,  
As likely to be weeping presently,—  
Your hands too—how I watch'd them all the while!

'Cry out St. Peter now,' quoth Aldovrand,  
I cried, 'St. Peter,' broke out from the wood  
With all my spears; 'Owe me a hand, no hand,  
And shortly slew them, none the less, by the rood,

We caught not Blackhead then, or any day;  
Months after that he died at last in bed,  
From a wound pick'd up at a barrier-fray;  
That same year's end a steel bolt in the head,

And much had living kill'd Teste Noire at last;  
John Froissart knoweth he is dead by now,  
No doubt, but knoweth not this tale just past;  
Perchance then you can tell him what I show.

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# CONCERNING GEFTRAY TESTE NOIRE 283

In my new castle, down beside the Eure,  
There is a little chapel of squared stone,  
Painted inside and out; in green oak pane  
There did I lay them, every weaned babe,  
And over it they lay, with stone-white hands  
Clasped fast together, hair made bright with gold  
The Jacques Ricard, known through many lands,  
Wrought cunningly; he's dead now—, am old.

## THE SON OF CROESUS

### ARGUMENT

[Croesus, King of Lydia, dreamed that he saw his son slain by an iron weapon, and though by every means he strove to avert this doom from him, yet thus it happened, for his son was slain by the hand of the man who seemed most of all likely to do the deed.]

Of Croesus tells my tale, a king of old  
In Lydia, ere the Mede fell on the land,  
A man made mighty by great heaps of gold,  
Feared for his invincible strong of heart and hand  
That 'neath his banners wrought out his command,  
And though his latter ending happed on ill,  
Yet first of every joy he had his fill.

Two sons he had, and one was dumb from birth,  
The other one, that Alys had to name,  
Grew up a fair youth, and of might and worth,  
And well it seemed the race wherefrom he came.  
From him a could never get reproach or shame,  
But yet no stroke he struck before his death,  
In no war-shout he spent his latest breath.

Now Croesus, lying on his bed at night,  
Dreamed that he saw this dear son and a low,

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And folk lamenting he was slain outright,  
And that some iron thing had dealt the blow;  
By whose hand guided he could nowise know,  
Or if in peace by traitors it were done,  
Or in some open war not yet begun.

Three times one night this vision broke his sleep,  
So that at last he rose up from his bed,  
That he might ponder how he best might keep  
The threatened danger from so dear a head;  
And, since he now was old enough to wed,  
The King sent men to search the lands around,  
Until some matchless maiden should be found;

That in her arms that Atye might forget  
The praise of men, and fame of history,  
Wherby full many a field has been made wet  
With blood of men, and many a deep green sea  
Been reddened therewithal, and yet shall be;  
That her sweet voice might drown the people's praise,  
Her eyes make bright the uneventful days.

So when at last a wonder they had brought,  
From some sweet land down by the ocean's rim,  
Then whom no faster could by man be thought,  
And ancient dames, scanning her limb by limb,  
Had said that she was fair enough for him,  
To her was Atye married with much show,  
And looked to dwell with her in bliss anon.

And in meantime afield he never went,  
Either to hunting or the frontier war,  
No dart was cast, nor any engine bent  
Against him, and the Lydian men afar  
Must rein their steeds, and the bright blossoms mar

If they have any lust of journey now;  
And in far meadows must they bend the bow.

And also through the palace everywhere  
The swords and spears were taken from the wall  
That long with honour had been hanging there,  
And from the golden pillars of the hall,  
Lest by perchance some sacred blade should fall,  
And in its falling bring revenge at last  
For many a fatal battle overpast.

And every day King Croesus wrought with care  
To save his dear son from that threatened end,  
And many a beast he offered up with prayer  
Unto the gods, and much of wealth did spend  
That they so prayed might yet perchance defend  
That life, until at least that he were dead,  
With earth laid heavy on his unseeing head.

But on the midst even of the wedding feast  
There came a man, who by the golden hall  
Sat down upon the steps, and man or beast  
He heeded not; but there against the wall  
He leaned his head, speaking no word at all,  
Till, with his son and son's wife, came the King,  
And then unto his gown the man did cling.

'What man art thou?' the King said to him then,  
'That in such guise thou prayest on thy knees;  
Hast thou some fell foe here among my men?  
Or hast thou some an ill deed on thee?  
Or has thy wife been carried over sea?  
Or hast thou on this day great need of gold?  
Or say, why else thou now art grown so bold?'

'O King,' he said, 'I ask no gold to-day  
And though indeed thy greatness drew me here,

And folk lamenting he was slain outright,  
And that some iron thing had dealt the blow,  
By whose hand guerded he could nowise know,  
Or if in policy by traitors it were done,  
Or in some open war not yet begun.

Three times one night this vision broke his sleep,  
So that at last he rose up from his bed,  
That he might ponder how he best might keep  
The land and danger from so near a head,  
And, since he now was too enough to wed,  
The King sent men to search the land around,  
Lest some matchless maiden should be found.

That in her arms the Atys might forget  
The praise of men, and fame of history,  
Whereby full many a field has been made wet  
With blood of men, and many a deep green sea  
Been reddened therewithal, and yet shall be,  
That her sweet voice might drown the people's praise,  
Her eyes make bright the uneventful days.

So when at last a wonder they had brought,  
From some sweet land down by the ocean's rim,  
Than whom no fatter could by man be thought,  
And ancient dames, scanning her limb by limb,  
Had said that she was fair enough for him,  
So her was Atys married with much show,  
And looked to dwell with her in bliss and joy.

And in meantime afield he never went,  
Either to hunting or the frontier war,  
No dart was cast, nor any engine bent  
Against him, and the Lydian men after  
Must join to it needs, and the bright day

If they have any lust of journey now,  
And in far meadows must they bend the bow.

And also through the palace everywhere  
The sword and spear were taken from the wall  
That long with honour had been hanging there,  
And in the golden pillars of the hall  
Lest by mishance some sacred blade should fall,  
And in its place bring revenge at last  
For many a fatal battle overpast.

And every day King Croesus wrought with care  
To save his dear son from that threatened end,  
And many a heart he offered up with prayer  
Unto the gods, and much of wealth did spend,  
That they so prayed might yet purchase defend  
That life, until at least that he were dead,  
With earth laid heavy on his unseeing head.

But in the midst even of this wedding feast  
There came a man, who by the golden hall  
Sat down upon the steps, and man or beast  
He heeded not, but there against the wall  
He leaned his head, speaking no word at all,  
Till, with his son and son's wife, came the King,  
And then unto his gown the man did change.

'What man art thou?' the King said to him then,  
'That in such guise thou prayest on thy knees;  
Hast thou some fell foe here among my men?  
Or hast thou done an ill deed unto me?  
Or has thy wife been carried over sea?  
Or hast thou on this day great need of gold?  
Or say, why else thou now art grown so bold.'

'O King,' he said, 'I ask no gold to-day,  
And though indeed my greatness drew me here,

No wrong have I that thou couldst wipe away;  
 And nought of mine the pirate folk did bear  
 Across the sea; none of thy folk I fear  
 But all the gods are now mine enemies;  
 Therefore I kneel before thee on my knees.

'For as with mine own brother on a day  
 Within the running place at home I played,  
 Unwittingly I smote him such-a-way  
 That dead upon the green grass he was laid;  
 Half-dead myself I fled away dismayed,  
 Wherefore I pray thee help me in my need.  
 And purify my soul of this sad deed.

'If of my name and country thou wouldst know,  
 In Phrygia yet my father is a king.  
 Gordius, the son of Midas, rich and now  
 In corn and cattle, golden cup and ring;  
 And mine own name before I did this thing  
 Was called Adrastus, whom, in street and hall,  
 The slayer of his brother men now call.'

'Friend,' said the king, 'have thou no fear of me;  
 For though, indeed, I am right happy now,  
 Yet well I know thou mayest not always be,  
 And I may chance some day to kneel full low,  
 And to some happy man make head to bow  
 With prayers to do a greater thing than this,  
 Dwell thou with us, and win again thy bliss.

'For in this city men in sport and play  
 Forget the trouble that the gods have sent;  
 Who therewithal send wine, and many a may  
 As for as she for whom the Trojan went;  
 And many a dear delight besides have lent,

may] maiden.

Which, whose is well loved of them shall keep  
 Till in forgetful death he falls asleep

'Therefore to-morrow shall those rites be done  
 That kindred blood demands that thou must shed,  
 That if the mouth of thine own mother's son  
 Did hap to curse thee ere he was quite dead,  
 The curse may be the lighter on thine head,  
 Because the flower-crowned head of many a beast  
 Has fallen voiceless in our glorious feast.'

Then did Adrastus rise and thank the King,  
 And the next day when yet low was the sun,  
 The sacrifice and every other thing  
 That unto these dread rites belonged, was done  
 And there Adrastus dwelt, hated of none  
 And loved of many, and the King loved him,  
 For brave and wise he was and strong of limb.

But chiefly amongst all did Atys love  
 The luckless stranger, whose fair tales of war  
 The Lydian's heart abundantly did move,  
 And much they talked of wandering out after  
 Some day, to lands where many marvels are,  
 With still the Phrygian through all things to be  
 The leader unto all felicity.

Now at this time folk came unto the King  
 Who on a forest's borders dwelling were,  
 Wherein they reaped full many a dangerous thing,  
 As wolf and wild bull, lion and brown bear;  
 But chiefly in that forest was the lair  
 Of a great bear that no man could withstand,  
 And many a woe he wrought upon the land.

Since long ago that man in Calydon  
 Held chase, no beast like him had once been seen.



He ruined vineyards lying in the sun,  
 After his harvesting the men must glean  
 What he had left; right glad they had not been  
 Among the tall stalks of the ripening wheat,  
 The fell destroyer's fatal tasks so meet.

For often would the lonely man entrapped,  
 In vain from his dire fury strive to hide  
 In some thick hedge, and other whiles it happened  
 Some careless stranger by his place would ride,  
 And the truss smote his fallen horse's side,  
 And what help then to such a wretch could come  
 With sword he could not draw, and far away from home?

Or else girls, sent their water-jars to fill,  
 Would come back pale, too terrified to cry,  
 Because they had but seen him from the hill;  
 Or else again with sighs rent wretchedly,  
 Some hapless damsel midst the briars would lie  
 Shortly to say, there neither man nor maid  
 Was safe afield whether they wrought or played.

Therefore were come these dwellers by the wood  
 To pray the King hereafter to them to send,  
 That they might live, and if he deemed it good,  
 That Atys with the other knights should wend,  
 They thought their grief the easier should have end;  
 For both by gods and men they knew him loved,  
 And easily by hope of glory moved.

'O Sire,' they said, 'thou know'st how Hercules  
 Was not content to wait till folk asked aid,  
 But sought the peas among their guarded trees;  
 Thou know'st what name the Theban Cadmus made,  
 And how the bull of Marathon was laid  
 Dead on the fallow of the Athenian land,  
 And how folk worshipped Ariadne's hand.

'For would thy son's name look upon the roll  
 Wherein such noble deeds as this are told,  
 And great delight shall surely fill thy soul,  
 Thinking upon his deeds when thou art old;  
 And thy brave heart is waxen faint and cold  
 Dost thou not know, O King, how men will strive  
 That they, when dead, and in their sons may live?'

He shuddered as they spoke, because he thought,  
 Most certainly a winning tale is this  
 To draw him from the net where he is caught,  
 For hearts of men grow weary of all bliss,  
 Nor is he one to be content with his,  
 If he should hear the trumpet-blast of fame  
 And far-off people calling on his name

'Good friends,' he said, 'go, get ye bath again,  
 Aye doubt not I will send you men to slay  
 This pest ye fear: yet shall your prayer be vain  
 If ye with any other speak to-day;  
 And for my son, with me he needs must stay,  
 For mighty cares oppress the Lydian land.  
 Fear not, for ye shall have a noble band.'

And with that promise they must be content,  
 And so departed, having feasted well.  
 And yet some god or other ere they went  
 If they were silent, thus their tale must tell  
 To more than one man; therefore it befell  
 That at last Prince Atys knew the thing,  
 And came with angry eyes unto the King.

'Father,' he said, 'since when am I grown vile?  
 Since when am I grown helpless in my hands?  
 Or else what folk with words entwrought with guile,  
 Thine ears have poisoned, that when far-off lands

My fame might fill, by thy most strange commands  
I needs must stay within this slothful home,  
Whereto would God that I had never come?

‘What! wilt thou take mine honour quite away?  
Wouldest thou, that, as with her I just have wed  
Rest among thy folk at end of day,  
She should be ever turning round her head  
To watch some man for war apparelled,  
Because he wears a sword that he may use,  
Which grace to me thou ever wilt refuse?’

‘Or dost thou think, when thou hast run thy race  
And thou art gone, and in thy stead I reign,  
The people will do honour to my place,  
Or that the lords and men will still remain,  
If yet my father’s sword be sharp in vain?  
If on the wall his armour still hang up,  
While for a spear I hold a drinking-cup?’

‘O Son!’ quoth Croesus, ‘well I know thee brave,  
And worthy of high deeds of chivalry,  
Therefore the more thy dear life would I save,  
Which now is threatened by the gods on high:  
Three times one night I dreamed I saw thee die,  
Slain by some deadly iron-pointed thing,  
While weeping lords stood round thee in a ring.’

Then loud laughed Alys, and he said again,  
‘Forget, and let this ugly dream tell her  
What day it was on which I should be slain?  
As may the gods grant I may one day be,  
And not from sickness die right wretchedly,  
Grieaning with pain, my lords about my bed  
Wishing to God that I were fairly dead;

‘But slain in battle, as the Lydian kings  
Have died ere now, in some great victory,  
While all about the Lydian shouting rings  
Death to the beaten foemen as they fly  
What death but this, O father! should I die?  
But if my life by iron shall be done,  
What steel to-day shall glitter in the sun?’

‘Yea, father, if to thee it seemeth good,  
To keep me from the bright steel-bearing throng,  
Let me be brave at least within the wood,  
For surely, if thy dream be true, no wrong  
Can hap to me from this beast’s tusnes strong:  
Unless perchance the beast is grown so wise,  
He haunts the forest clad in Lydian guise.’

Then Croesus said: ‘O Son, I love thee so,  
That thou shalt do thy will upon this side:  
But since unto this hunting thou must go,  
A trusty friend along with thee shall ride,  
Who not for anything shall leave thy side.  
I think, indeed, he loves thee well enough  
To thrust his heart ’twixt thee and any blow.’

‘Go then, O Son, and if by some smart span  
Thy life be measured, how shall it harm thee,  
If while life last thou art a happy man?  
And thou art happy only unto me  
Is trembling lest, and infelicity:  
The trembling of the man who loves on earth;  
But unto thee is hope and present mirth.’

‘Nay, be thou not ashamed, for on this day  
I fear not much: thou read’st my dream aright,  
No teeth or claws shall take thy life away,  
And it may chance, ere thy last glorious fight,

I shall be blinded by the endless night;  
And brave Adrastus on this day shall be  
Thy safeguard, and shall give good heart to me.

'Go then, and send him hither, and depart,  
And as the herbes did, so mayest thou do,  
Winning such fame as well may please thine heart.'  
With that word from the King did Atys go,  
Who, left behind, sighed, saying, 'May it be so,  
Even as I hope, and yet I would to God  
These men upon my threshold never had trod.'

So when Adrastus to the King was come  
He said unto him, 'O my Phrygian friend,  
We in this land have given thee a home,  
And 'gainst all foes thy life will we defend:  
Wherefore for us that life thou should'st spend,  
If any day there should be need thereof;  
And now a trusty friend I need right sore.

'Doubtless ere now thou hast heard many say  
There is a doom that threatens my son's life;  
Therefore this place is strept of arms to-day,  
And therefore still bids Atys with his wife,  
And tempts not any god by raising strife.  
Yet none the less by no means of his,  
To whom would war be most abundant, bliss.

'And since to-day some glory he may gain  
Against a monster bestial enemy  
And that the meaning of my dream is plain,  
That each that by his steel alone shall die,  
His burning wish I may not well deny,  
Therefore afraid to-morrow doth he wend  
And hereinafter thou shalt show thyself my friend—

'For thou as captain of his band shalt rise,  
And keep a watchful eye of everything,  
Nor leave him, whatsoever may befall,  
Lo, thou art brave, the son of a great king,  
And with thy praises doth this city ring,  
Why should I tell thee what a name those gain,  
Who dying for their friends, die not in vain.'

Then said Adrastus, 'Now were I grown base  
Beyond all words, if I should spare for aught  
In guarding him; so sit with smiling face,  
And of this matter take no further thought,  
Bees he with my life shall his life be thought,  
If ill should hap; and no ill tale it were,  
If I should die for what I hold so dear.'

'Then went Adrastus, and next morn all things  
That belonged unto the hunting were well dight,  
And forth they went clad as the sons of kings.  
Fair was the morn, as through the sunshine bright  
They rode, the Prince half-wild with great delight,  
The Phrygian stooping on him soberly,  
And ever looking round with watchful eye.

So through the clays all the great route fast  
With many a great black-puzzled yellow-headed;  
And then the gleaming country-side they passed,  
Until they came to sour and rugged ground,  
And there rode up a little heathy mound,  
That overlooked the scrubby woods and low,  
That of the beast's lair somewhat they might know.

And there a good man of the country-side  
Showed them the places where he mostly lay,  
And they descending, through the wood did rue,  
And followed on his tracks for half the day.



And at the last they brought him well to bay,  
Within an oozy space amidst the wood,  
About the which a ring of aders stood.

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So when the hounds' changed voices clear they heard,  
With hearts aflame on towards him straight they drew,  
Alys the first of all, of-nought afraid,  
Except that folk should say some other slew  
The beast; and lusty his horn he blew,  
Going afoot; then, mighty spear in hand,  
Adrastus headed all the following band.

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Now when they came unto the plot of ground  
Where stood the bear, hounds dead about him lay  
Or sprawled about, bleeding from many a wound,  
But still the others held him well at bay,  
Nor had he been beset thus ere that day  
But yet, seeing Alys, straight he rushed at him,  
Speckled with foam, bleeding in flank and hind.

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Then Alys stood and cast his well-steel'd spear  
With a great shout, and straight and well it flew,  
For now the broad blade cutting through the ear,  
A stream of blood from out the shoulder drew  
And therewithal another, no less true,  
Adrastus cast, whereby the bear had died.  
But Alys drew the bright sword from his side,

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And to the tottering bear he drew augh:  
But as the sun's rays ran adown the blade  
Adrastus threw a javelin hastily,  
For of the mighty beast was he afraid,  
Lest by his wounds he should not yet be stayed,  
But with a last run cast him far away,  
And dying there, the son of Croesus lay.

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But even as the feathered dart he hinged,  
His strained, gasping eyes beheld the end,  
And changed seemed all the fashion of the world,  
And past and future into one did blend,  
As he beheld the fixed eyes of his friend;  
That no reproach had in them, and no fear,  
For Death had seized him ere he thought him near.

Adrastus shrieked, and running up he caught  
The falling man, and from his bleeding side  
Drew out the dart, and seeing that death had brought  
Deliverance to him, he thereby had died  
But ere his hand the luckless spear could guide,  
And he the refuge of poor souls would win,  
The horror-stricken hunters had rushed in.

And these, with blows and cries he heeded nought,  
His unresisting hands made haste to bind,  
Then of the alder-boughs a brier they wrought,  
And laid the corpse thereon, and gan to wind  
Homeward amidst the tangled wood and bund,  
And going slowly, at the eventide,  
Some leagues from Sardis did that day abide.

Onward next morn the slaughtered man they bore,  
With him that slew him, and at end of day  
They reached the city, and with mourning sore  
Toward the King's palace did they take their way.  
He in an open western chamber lay  
Feasting, though inwardly his heart did burn  
Until that Alys should to him return.

And when those white-fire smites upon his ear  
He set the wine-cup down, and to his feet  
He rose, and bitter all-consuming fear  
Swallowed his joy, and nigh he went to meet

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That which was coming through the weeping street,  
But in the end he thought it good to wait,  
And stood there doubting all the ill of fate.

But when at last up to that royal place  
Folk brought the thing he once had held so dear,  
Still stood the King, staring with a ghastly face  
As they brought forth Adrastus and the bear,  
But spoke at last, slowly without a tear,  
"O Phrygian man, that I did pity  
But through thee that Atys came to die!"

"O Kings" Adrastus said, "take now my life,  
With whatsoever seemeth good to thee,  
As my word went, for I would end this strife,  
And underneath the earth lie quietly,  
Nor is it my will here alive to be  
For as my brother, so I once Atys died,  
And this unlucky hand some god will guide."

Then as a man constrained, the tale he told  
From end to end, nor spared himself one whit.  
And as he spoke, the wood did still behold  
The trodden grass, and Atys dead on it,  
And many a change o'er the King's face did flit  
Of kingly rage, and hatred and despair,  
As on the slayer's face he still did stare.

At last he said, "Thy death avails me naught,  
The gods themselves have done this bitter deed,  
That I was all too happy was their thought,  
Therefore thy heart is dead and mine doth bleed,  
And I am helpless as a trodden weed.  
Thou art but as the handle of the spear,  
The carter has far off from any fear

"Yet, if thy heart they meant, I can do this,—  
Loose him and let him go in peace from me—  
I will not slay the slayer of all my bliss,  
Yea, go, poor man, for when thy face I see,  
I curse the gods for their felicity  
Surely some other slayer they would have found,  
If thou hadst long ago been under ground,

"Alas, Adrastus! in my inmost heart  
I knew the gods would one day do this thing  
But deemed indeed that it would be thy part  
To comfort me amidst my sorrowing,  
Make haste to go, for I am still a King!  
Madness may take me, I have many hands  
Who will not spare to do my worst commands"

With that Adrastus' bonds were done away,  
And forthwith to the city gates he ran,  
And on the road where they had been that day  
Rushed through the gathering night, and some lone man  
Beheld next day his visage wild and wan,  
Peering from out a thicket of the wood  
Where he had spilt that well-beloved blood.

And now the day of burial pomp must be,  
And to those rites all lords of Lydia came  
About the King, and that day, they and he  
Cast royal gifts of rich things on the flame;  
But where they stood and wept, and called by name  
Upon the dead, amidst them came a man  
With raiment rent, and haggard face and wan.

Who when the marshals would have thrust him out  
And men looked strange on him, began to say,  
"Surely the world is changed since ye have doubt  
Of who I am; nay, turn me not away,

For ye have called me princely ere-to-day— 460  
 Andrasus, son of Gordius, a great king,  
 Where unto Pallas Phrygian maidens sing.

“O Andrasus, many a rich thing have ye cast  
 Into this flame; but I myself will give  
 A greater gift, since now I see at last 465  
 The gods are wearied for that still I live,  
 And with their will, why should I longer strive?  
 Arise, O Arys, thus I give to thee  
 A life that lived for thy felicity

And therewith from his side a knife he drew, 470  
 And, crying out, upon the pile he leapt,  
 And with one mighty stroke himself he slew  
 So that these princes both together slept,  
 And their light ashes gathered up, were kept  
 Within a golden vessel wrought all o’er 475  
 With hastenies of his hunting of the bear

WILLIAM MORRIS, 1834-96.

## THE DELIVERY OF ISFULT

For the knight  
 Forth was once ridden toward some frontier sight  
 Against the lewd folk of the Christian lands  
 That warred with wild and intermittent hands  
 Against the king’s north borders; and there came  
 A knight unchristened yet of unknown name,  
 Swart Palamege, upon a secret quest,  
 To high Tintagel, and abode as guest  
 In likeness of a minstrel with the king.  
 Not was there, man could sound so sweet a string  
 Save Tristram only, of all held best on earth  
 And one good eve, being full of wine and mirth,  
 Ere sunset left the walls and waters dark,  
 To that strange minstrel strongly swore King Mark,  
 By all that makes a knight’s faith firm and strong,  
 That he for guardon of his harp and song  
 Might travel and have his thing. Straight there came  
 Up the swart cheek a flash of swartlier flame,  
 And the deep eyes faulked of glittering night  
 Laughed out in lightnings of triumphant light  
 As the grim harper spake: “O king, I crave  
 No gift of man that king may give to slave,  
 But this thy crowned queen only, this thy wife,  
 Whom yet unseen I loved, and set my life  
 On this poor chance to compass, even as here,  
 Being fatter famed than all save Guenevere.  
 Then as the noise of seaward-storm that mocks  
 With roaring laughter from reverberate rocks  
 The cry from ships near shipwreck, harsh and high  
 Rose all the wrath and wonder in one cry



Through all the long moor's hollow depth and length  
 That hearts of strong men kindled in their strength  
 May speak in laughter lion like, and cease,  
 Being wearied: only two men heed their police  
 And each glared hard on other: but King Mark  
 Spoke first of these, "Man, though thy craft be dark  
 And thy mind evil that begot this thing,  
 Yet stands the word once plighted of a king:  
 Fast: and albeit less evil it were for me,  
 To give my life up than my wife, or be  
 A landless man crowned only with a curse,  
 Yet this in God's and all men's sight were worse,  
 To live soul-shamed, a man of broken troth,  
 Abhorred of men as I abhor mine oath  
 Which yet I may forswear not." And he bowed  
 His head, and wept: and all men wept aloud,  
 Save one, that heard him weeping: but the queen  
 Wept not: and stately yet than eyes had seen  
 That ever looked upon her queenly state  
 She rose, and in her eyes her heart was great  
 And full of wrath seen manifest and scorn  
 More strong than anguish to go thence forlorn  
 Of all men's comfort and her natural right.  
 And they went forth into the dawn of night.  
 Long by wild ways and clouded light they rode,  
 Silent: and fear less keen at heart abode  
 With Isolt than with Palamede: for awe  
 Constrained him, and the might of love's high law,  
 That can make lewd men loyal: and his heart  
 Yearned on her, if perchance with amorous art  
 And soothfast skill of very love he might  
 For courtesy find favour in her sight  
 And comfort of her mercies: for he wist  
 More grace might come of her sweet mouth unkindled

65 Than joy for violence done it, that should make  
 His name abhorred for shame's disloyal sake  
 And in the stormy starlight clouds were thrown  
 And thickened by short gusts of changing wind  
 That parted like a sick man's fitful breath:  
 70 And like a moan of lions hurt to death  
 Came the sea's hollow noise along the night.  
 But ere its gloom from aught but foam had light  
 They halted, being weary: and the knight  
 As reverently forbore her where she lay  
 75 As one that watched his sister's sleep all day.  
 Nor durst he kiss or touch her hand or hair  
 For love and shamefast pity, seeing how fair  
 She slept, and fenciless from the fital air.  
 And shame at heart stung nigh to death, desire,  
 80 But grief at heart burned in him like a fire  
 For hers and his own sorrowing sake, that had  
 Such grace for guerdon as makes glad men so,  
 To have their will and want it. And the day  
 Sprang and afar along the wild waste way  
 85 They heard the pulse and press of hurrying horse hoofs  
 play:  
 And like the rushing of a ravenous falcon  
 Whose wings make tempest of the darkness, came  
 Upon them headlong as in thunder borne  
 Forth of the darkness of the labouring mom  
 90 Tristram: and up forthright upon his steed  
 Leapt, as one blithes of battle, Palamede,  
 And mightily with shock of horse and man  
 They lashed together: and fair that fight began  
 As fair came up that summer: to and fro,  
 95 With knees nigh staggered and stout heads bent low  
 From each quick shock of spears on either side,  
 Reared the strong steeds heavily, haggard-eyed

And heartened high with passion of their pride  
 As sheer the stout spears shocked again, and flew  
 Sharp-splintering: then, his sword at each knight drew, 100  
 They flashed and foined full royalty, so long  
 That but to see so fair a strife and strong  
 A man might well have given out of his life  
 One year's roid space forlorn of love or strife,  
 As when a bright north-easter, great of heart, 105  
 Scattering the strengths of squadrons, hark apart  
 Ship from ship labouring violently, in such toil  
 As earns but ruin—with even so strong recoil  
 Back were the steeds hurled from the spear shock, fair  
 And foiled of triumph: then with tightened rein 110  
 And stroke of spur, inveterate, rather knight  
 Bore in again upon his foe with might,  
 Heart-hungry for the hot-mouthed feast of fight,  
 And all athirst of mastery, but full soon  
 The jarring notes of that tempestuous tone 115  
 Fell, and his mighty music made of hands  
 Contending, clamorous through the loud waste lands,  
 Broke at once off, and shattered from his steed  
 Fell, as a mainmast running, Palamede,  
 Stunned: and those horses left him where he lay, 120  
 And lightly through green lawns they rode away.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE, 1837-1909.

foined] thrust.

## HEATHER ALE

### *A Galloway Legend*

From the bonny bells of heather  
 They brewed a drink long-syne;  
 "Was sweeter far than honey,  
 Was stronger far than wine.  
 They brewed it and they drank it,  
 And lay in a blessed swoon  
 For days and days together  
 In their dwellings underground.

There rose a king in Scotland,  
 A fell man to his foes,  
 "He smote the Picts in battle,  
 He hunted them like roes  
 Over miles of the red mountain  
 He hunted as they fled,  
 And slewed the dwarfish bodies  
 Of the dying and the dead.

Summer came in the country,  
 Red was the heather bed,  
 But the manner of the brewing  
 Was none alive to tel,  
 In the graves that were like children's  
 On many a mountain head,  
 The Brewsters of the Heather  
 Lay numbered with the dead.

The king in the red moorland  
 Rode on a summer's day,  
 And the bees hummed, and the carlews  
 Cried beside the way.

The king rode, and was angry,  
Black was his brow and pale,  
To rule in a land of heather  
And lack the Heather Ale.

30

It fortuned that his vassals,  
Riding fur on the heath,  
Came on a stone that was fallen  
And vermin had benched  
Rusely plucked from their riding,  
Never a word they spoke:  
A son and his aged father—  
Last of the dwarfish folk

35

40

The king sat high on his charger,  
He looked on the little men,  
And the dwarfish and swarthy couple  
Looked at the king again.  
Down by the shore he had them;  
And there on the giddy brink—  
'I will give you ale, ye vassals,  
For the secret of the drink.'

45

There stood the son and father  
And they looked high and low;  
The heather was red around them,  
The sea rumbled below,  
And up and spoke the father,  
Small was his voice to hear—  
'I have a word in private,  
A word for the royal ear.

50

55

'Life is dear to the aged,  
' And honour a little thing;  
I would gladly sell the secret,  
Quoth the Pict to the King.

60

His voice was small as a sparrow's,  
And shrill and wonderful clear,  
'I would gladly sell my secret,  
Only my son I fear.

65

'For life is a little matter,  
And death is nought to the young;  
' And I dare not sell my honour  
Under the eye of my son  
Take him, O king, and bind him,  
And cast him far in the deep;  
And it is I will tell the secret  
'That I have sworn to keep'

70

75

80

They took the son and bound him,  
Neck and heels as a chong,  
' And a lad took him and swung him  
And flung him far and strong,  
And the sea swallowed his body,  
Like that of a child of ten,  
And there on the cliff stood the father,  
Last of the dwarfish men.

85

'True was the word I told you,  
Only my son I feared,  
For I doubt the sailing courage  
That goes without the beard,  
But now in vain is the torture,  
Fire shall never avail  
More dies in my bosom  
The secret of Heather Ale.'

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, 1830-94



## NOTES

### ALFRED TENNYSON

Born at Somersby, Lincolnshire, on 6 August 1809. At Cambridge he won the chancellor's medal for English verse, his first volume was published in 1830. It was not until 1842, however, that his reputation was secured by the issue of *Poems* (in two volumes), which contains some of his finest work. *The Princess* appeared in 1847, and was followed in 1850 by *The Memoriam*, a poem caused by the death of his friend Arthur Hallam (in 1833). In the same year he was made Laureate. In 1859 began the publication of the *Lays of the Kings*, a series of blank verse poems on the Arthurian cycle of legends. He continued to write until his death on 6 October 1892.

P. 11. *Morte D'Arthur*. The poem is given here formed part of a longer poem *The Epic*. Tennyson afterwards, 1869, removed it from its setting, added another 143 lines, and made it the concluding Idyll. It is concerned with the last battle which Arthur fought, between himself and the rebel knights under Mordred. In the symposium of the Idylls, where Arthur represents the soul, this battle is the time of the death of the body and the passage of the soul into darkness.

The Arthurian stories form one of the great groups of medieval tales, and attributed to themselves the other groups of the Graal and leucht themes until the whole formed one magnificent cycle. The best and most popular expression of it in English literature is the *Morte D'Arthur* of Sir Thomas Malory (c. 1470). Tennyson chose and adapted incidents from this for his own purposes.

1. 4. *Lycarnesse*: a name given to the hundreded and beyond Cornwall, of which the Idyll lies only remote above water, but also generally to the Western dominions of Arthur's kingdom.

1. 5. *Sir Bedivere*: one of the knights of the Table; in some accounts he was the King's hunter.

1. 21. *Camelot*, the city of Arthur, built by Merlin. Malory identified it with Winchester.

1. 23. *Merlin*: one of the most famous magicians of romance, and the King's friend and counsellor.

P. 14. 104. *marion of the lake*: the Lady of the Lake is one of those personages who move in mystery through the Arthurian story. Her office and deeds vary in different accounts, but she is always beautiful and fair.

P. 16, l. 98 *Three Queens*. *Maloc* says that the three were Arthur's sister Morgan le Fay, the Queen of Northgalis, and the Queen of the Waste Land.

P. 17, l. 43. *The holy Elders* the wise men who came to the birth of Christ (see Matthew 2, 1-11).

P. 18, l. 59. *Ardur* the name apparently comes from the British name for Ashmolebury, York or Ardre, the island of apples; but here it is of course a place of physical and spiritual healing.

### HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Born at Portland, Maine, U.S.A., on 27 February 1807. After studying for three years in Europe he was appointed to the Chair of Modern Languages, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine; and afterwards to a similar chair at Harvard. He resigned this in 1834 to devote himself to writing. He died at Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1882. His popularity was, and has remained, immense; his poetry is admired but actual.

*The Saga of King Olaf* is taken from the *Heimskringla*, a chronicle-history of the Norse kings. Olaf 940-1000 reigned from 980 and converted the land to Christianity by force.

P. 20, heading *King Svend* King of Denmark 986-1014 who had married Sigrid the Haughty of Sweden. A meeting—with a view to marriage—had taken place at an earlier date between Sigrid and Olaf, but the queen had refused to become a Christian, and Olaf had struck her in the face with his glove. The story is given in section A. 11 of the complete poem.

L. 4. *Fandora*: the southern neighbour on the Baltic.  
L. 5. *warrior* killed. *direction* changed.  
L. 7. *Ida of Sweden*: identification is not possible.  
L. 9. *Queen Gunnild* *Svend's* former wife, whom he had been forced to marry.

L. 12. *Sigrid the Haughty*, see note on the heading.

P. 21, l. 42. *Thing*, meeting of the chief men.

L. 45. *Eric the Norseman* son of Earl Hakon, who had been mighty in Norway till he was overthrown and slain by Olaf.

L. 48. *Finnmark*, a northern province of Norway.

L. 53. *Einar* one of King Svend's nobles and brother-in-law to King Olaf's wife. He made friends with Olaf in order to join him into the ambush.

P. 22, l. 68 *Sud-baven* the North German bay into which the Oder flows.

P. 24, l. 123. *Ragnarok*, the day of the final things. See Note on p. 183, ll. 349-350.

L. 136. *Siggeir*. Olaf's ship was called *The Long Serpent*, and was said to be the best sh. p. ever made in Norway.

L. 143. *Ulf the Red* Olaf's standard-bearer.

L. 175. *Hakon* *son* *Hakon* the Earl.

P. 26, heading *Kjartan* *Tapherskalder*, a famous architect, and one of Olaf's household. He was only eighteen years old.

L. 189. *Lyra* *Skaldaspiller*, a Scandinavian poet.

P. 27, l. 225. *Kämpen* *warrior*.

P. 28, l. 256. *Kolbrunn* King Olaf's marshal, a handsome man, who was respected and brought before Earl Leif, but not put to death.

P. 29, l. 266. *Orkanger* a forest of central Norway, on the Orkla River.

### SIR SAMUEL PERCIVAL

Born 20 March 1810 in Belfast. He was called to the Irish Bar in 1833, but in 1867 he retired from practice on his appointment as deputy keeper of the public records of Ireland; for his services in this office he was knighted in 1878. He was an antiquarian of repute, and produced a good deal of prose and verse dealing with the old Irish tales of heroes and saints, of which *Perceval* that follows is one of the best. In 1881 he was elected president of the Royal Irish Academy, he died at Hoxth, in the county of Dublin, on 9 August 1886.

P. 31, l. 5. *Mr. M. M. Penney*, William Maunsell Penney, Irish scholar, 1829-89.

L. 7. *Torah* *Deuteronomy*.

L. 11. *Mr. Crowe* *O'Brien* *Crowe*, an Irish scholar of the nineteenth century.

L. 23. *Prose de la* *Perceval*, a Greek historian 400 B.C. He wrote among other works, two books *de la* *Persie*, *On the Persian War*.

L. 30. *material*, etc. *It*, *it* went mad in the pains of the world; *every* *red*.

L. 33. *Tara* in Meath, the old centre of Ireland, a royal residence and the place of popular meetings.

P. 32. *Book of Hyoth*, an Irish MS. chronicle now in the library of Lambeth Palace.

*Bairn-bary* in Co. Dub. n.

*Rathgallen*, a seaport, 20 miles north of Dublin.

1. *Conary*, one of the heroic and mythical kings of Ireland.

1. 3. *Don'Donn*, a famous warrior whose great grandchildren were foster-brothers to the king. They became monarchs and were exiled.

1. 14. *Ingeal*, Ingeal the One-eyed, said to be the son of the King of Britain. He had only one eye, which contained three pupils.

1. 17. *Alba*, Scotland.

P. 33, l. 39. *Thomond*, County Cliffe, a principality of Munster.

1. 40. *Beltane-day*, the feast of Beltane appears to have been divided into three periods—May Day, Midsummer Day, and All Souls Day.

1. 51. *Street Midsummer and Street Calson* see Introductory Note,

P. 34.

1. 57. *Clara-Macaras*, a district in the north-east of Ireland.

P. 35, l. 37. *Enasar*, *Rmain*, *Maebia*, now *Naran-Rath*, the capital, or ancient Usher.

P. 36, l. 140. *Ria-Eder*, on the coast of Ireland, near Howth.

P. 37, l. 159. *apostrophes*, herakle, ushers.

P. 38, l. 201. *Troy Fereest*, Tracht Furthion or Munstham, i.e. Merion Strand on the Dublin coast.

P. 39, l. 239. *Taltur*, Teltown, Co. Meath.

P. 40, l. 354. *Corine*, *Corklongan*, son of the high king Conchobar, who for the love of Deirdre broke the safe-conduct and caused her husband to be slain.

1. 282. *Moera*, Queen of Connaught.

P. 43, l. 374. *Thia*, *De Danair*, strictly, people of the god of Dana, the gods of air, light, and life, but so generally the fairy people.

P. 44, l. 394. *Smith*, *Wayland*, *Smith* was a mythical hero of home and worker in iron and steel, whose work was famous.

*Lechman*, Scandinavian.

P. 45, ll. 409-413. The heroes of the Red Branch, so called from the Red Branch Hall at Emain Macha, were the paladins or round table of the old Irish heroic cycle, the most celebrated of them being the valiant Cuchulain.

P. 47, ll. 501-3. *hatched*, in the compact between Ingeal and the Irish king the one party was made on Britain and in the high king Ingeal's father and brothers were killed.

P. 54, l. 177. *Bracra*, *Conaill*, the shield of Conaill.

P. 57, l. 796. *Tograd-Gang*, the wall of Cair, an unidentified spring near Bohernabreena, Co. Dublin.

## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

Born at Calcutta on 18 July 1811, the son of a secretary of the East India Company. After leaving Cambridge he read some law, but by 1837 he was making a living by literary hack-work. In 1840 he became a contributor to *Punch*, which had been started in the previous year, and achieved his first marked success by *The Good Papers*, published in 1846. The great novels which established his position appeared from 1847 to 1865. He died on 21 December 1863. His verse is generally negligible, but his occasional poem has a vigour which is worth enjoying.

P. 62, l. 1. *Brentford*, a town in Middlesex.

P. 63, l. 49. *Littles*, the first examination for the degree of B.A.; *Coupage*, the final examination for the same degree.

1. 1. *silver*, originally a small Dutch silver coin, now meaning any of small value.

P. 65, l. 98. *casaforte*, a marble structure to carry a coffin, a movable hearse.

1. 106. *the challenge*, dispute.

P. 68, l. 187. *lease and copyhold*, estates held by different kinds of tenure.

1. 22. *tenements*, freehold possessions such as houses.

P. 69, l. 237. *steward*, manager, steward.

P. 70, l. 240. *Chiswick*, &c., suburbs of London.

## ROBERT BROWNING

Born in Southampton Street, Chancery Lane, London, on 7 May 1812. He said no profession but poetry, not any rivals to it in his mind, since his wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, was his inspiration, as it was here. He married her in 1846, and eloped with her seven days after the marriage. Browning's life was spent mostly in Italy or in England and he died, twenty-eight years after Elizabeth, in Venice on 12 December 1889. He received Tennyson's reputation, the gift was for a sublimity of thought which perhaps none had not quite reached. His greatest poem, *The Ring and the Book* (1868), was, naturally, enough the one that inspired his triumph.

## THE FLIGHT OF THE DOCKSWY

P. 73, l. 86-7. *Malaga*, a famous wine from Roumania.

P. 78, l. 245. *hallops*, shell-fish, a rounded projection.



P 791 249. *Harems*. Prudent and Farwell. Includes notes on hunting, women in attendance, and foreign officials.

\* 80. + 297 = 1104. A number with 4 figures. It is even.

PBX 1 542 cases in the 11 compositions in 1974 the various  
parties taken from one or the other

9 was Sultan of Egypt 1179. Because the leader of Saladin through Syria and destroyed the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. He is one of the traditional chivalrous heroes of romance. The Duke's anxiety to form his face after his ex-Nero's type was presumably only to express

1. 334, probably see note on 1. 149.

P. 84, l. 310. price-worth: a small animal of the woad-kind

Fr. B. I. 438. *prout* the word was used originally for a piece of  
rhythmic prose—e.g. in church between the epistle and the gospel.

P. 65, l. 703, *apostroph* upper part of nbs.

**E. 702.** *Carib*: an aboriginal inhabitant of southern West Indies.

P. 87. I. Str. contains a hollow chamber in the heart

P 98, a 84. M. Joseph McDermott, according to Green v 21, first named at the age of 187 years, and afterwards "son and daughter". But there is no mention of any son of the name of Sam.

1. *Sperm oil*—oil from a particular kind of whale, used for candles and cosmetics.

P 99,1 097. ~~Just~~ the reference is in the story in Ostrich 1960.  
 "month with physics" see verse 11 and because of his  
 name.

Once one of the heroes of the medieval tale of the Arthur and Orkney. He was suckled by a bear, became the terror of France, and was known as the Wild Man of the Forest.

Доказано.

P 90, l. 12. ~~Glenlivet~~ a Scotch whisky.

P. 100. l. 16. *Borel*: a stag having antlers of twelve points or more.

... *Hammond*, a cigar made in Cuba; a West Indian island, from the

could be as a

43. Double-Firsts: first-class University honors in two subjects

What are the two main types of cells in the nervous system?

structure for all paths.

P. 112 P. 112: note-face: right about face.

I. 115. *Alouatta*, the pseudonym of Jean-François Gravelot, is noted

1. 1984. 210000. 224. 971.

Р. 106, л. 207-8, *Синаксаръ . . . Давидъ и Саввафъ* xvii

P 107, #432 Tony an episode originally applied to the King & party a folk was opposed to, a stoic, true, simple and traditional thought, hence, a sound fellow, which seems to be the message Browning, from his need for a rhyme, imposed upon it here.

424. Homer: the hypocrite; author of the two oldest Greek poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

## WILLIAM BELL SCOTT

Born on 7 September 8, at 5 Leazes, Edinburgh. In 1817 he came to London and supported himself by etching, engraving, and painting. In 1819 he received a letter from the Government schools of design at Newcastle-on-Tyne. On his return to London in 1864 he renewed his acquaintance with the staff Library and artistic circles, especially with Rossetti and his group. Died on 22 November 1894, at Peshall, Cusack, Ayrshire, where he had painted a series of designs illustrating the 'King & Quene' (see note on p. 222, title).

P. 103, l. 24, *græci*: small silver coin worth about fourpence.

P. 230, l. 5b. *Lombard*: a native of Lombardy, a district of North Italy conquered in the 6th century by Germanic invaders.

P II . qq. *blackman* in the records of slavery is often applied to the white (actual or deck) and black man.

CHARLES KINGSLEY

Born on 12 June 1819 at Holm Wicarsgate, Devonshire. He was educated in 1842 to the curacy of Eversley, Hampshire; became vicar there in 1844, and died there on 27 January 1895. In 1860 he was professor of history at Cambridge; in 1869 he was canon of Leicester and in 1873 of Westminster. He was one of the leaders of the Christian Socialist movement for reform, and certain of his novels (*Yea* and *After Ye*) are full of this spirit. Others are concerned with historical conflicts between Paganism and Christianity in Alexandria, between Spain and England in the 13th century, between Normans and Saxons at the time of the Conquest. His verse is not attractive, except in one or two short lyrics and in the poem which follows.

P. 113, n. 1. *Grass*, one of the major plants of the Mediterranean hills, only on the summit of Mt. Li.

L. 4. *Drymonia*: a monotonous in Thessaly on the summit of v. 13, according to the Greek myths, were the dwellings of the gods.

1. Zen. chief of the group, according to Lorenz, in the 1940s  
moved from a small hut by the river and a large one at the lake.

Cretes, where he was nourished by milk from the goat Amalthaea. Afterwards he overthrew his father and divided the universe between himself and his two brothers: hell to Pluto, the sea to Poseidon, and earth and heaven to himself.

*Pallas Athena* holy and virgin goddess of wisdom.

*Hermes* the messenger of the gods, and the patron of travellers, shepherds, warriors, and thieves. He conducted the souls of the dead to the shores of the river Styx, beyond which was the place of shades.

*Apollon* the god of sun, music, and poetry.

*Phoenicia* the Phoenicians, a country to the north of Palestine, whose inhabitants were the greatest navigators and traders of the ancient world.

*Poseidon* the brother of Zeus, who in the division of the universe between the three, received the ocean for his dominion.

P. 114, l. 17. *swims* *climbed*.

P. 115, l. 34. *Aethiopia* lay to the south of Egypt, and was reported to be the home of the first inhabitants of the earth. Men and women were alike dark in colour, but the men were, and the women beautiful.

L. 17. *Hera* or *Ira*, sister and wife of Zeus, chief of the goddesses and queen of heaven.

L. 39. *Hephaestus* a lame god, patron of all who worked in metal; his forge was reported to be under the volcano Etna (see note on 114). His name among the Romans was *Vulcan*.

L. 46. *Atargatis* *Antargatis*, a Syrian half-goddess.

P. 121, l. 138. *Nereus* one of the lesser sea-gods.

L. 141. *Tritons* dwelled in the sea, who had the form half of man and half of fish.

P. 127, l. 251. *Amphitrite* the wife of Neptune.

*Cytherea* a name given to Aphrodite (see note on l. 369), from the island Cythra near Greece, where the goddess first rose from the sea.

P. 128, l. 263. *Argos* one of the great cities of the heroic age in Greek mythology.

P. 130, l. 307. *Titan* a name given to an ancient race of giants, the enemies of the gods.

*Pierus* one of the lesser sea-gods, who had the gift of prophecy.

P. 131, l. 311. *the lord of the world* see note on l. 13.

P. 133, l. 125. *the Argonauts* the *Argo* was the shield of Zeus, covered with the skin of the goat Amalthaea, by whom he had been nourished.

L. 137. *the Gorgons* there were three Gorgons, of whom the youngest,

Medusa, was slain by Perseus. Her hair was adders, and the glance of her eyes turned those who met it to stone, and Pallas therefore gave to the hero a shield of brass, in which he watched her movements.

P. 134, l. 363. *Amalthea* see notes on l. 1, 346.

L. 368. *Tachos* *remains* *Idolus*, a mountain of Cyprus, sacred to Aphrodite.

L. 369. *Aphrodite* goddess of beauty and love. She was born from the foam of the sea.

P. 136, l. 400. *Troilus* a name given to Pallas, who had a temple near Troy, a lake in N. Africa.

L. 406. *Adonis* a lover of Aphrodite, killed by a wild boar.

P. 138, l. 431. *Eris* the goddess of anger, strife, and destruction.

L. 441. *Aetna* a volcano in Sicily.

*Charis* a goddess and the wife of Hephaestus.

P. 140, l. 480. *Hestia* goddess of youth.

*Harmoneia* one of the lesser deities.

L. 482. *Poseidon* a name given to Artemis, goddess of virginity, the moon, and the hunt.

#### MATTHEW ARNOLD

Born on 24 December 1822 at Laleham, near Sudbury. He was the son of the famous head master of Rugby, where for a short time he was a master. In 1847 he became an inspector of schools, a post which he held till 1883. He was professor of poetry at Oxford 1857-67. He died at Liverpool on 15 April 1888, leaving it has been said, the English mind more accessible to ideas than he found. His work was performed by an ethical essay and lecture, a poetry and work is more difficult to estimate. It suffered from too much reflection and too many statistics, but there is no verse of the 19th century to which it is easier or more satisfying to return, and though there are greater poets there are none who are so far out of place.

#### SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Rustum was a semi-mythical Persian hero, supposed to have lived for four hundred years, a good-god. He performed many heroic acts, slew dragons, and delivered Persia from the Tartars. He was married to the daughter of the King of Ader-bajistan, who died a year after Sohrab from sorrow at the death of her son. The episode recounted in the poem took place during one of the campaigns between the Tartars and the Persians.



- R 142, L 2. *Amu* a Central Asian river, now called the Jihm, rising on the Pamir plateau, and flowing past Afghanistan and past Bokhara through Turkestan into the Aral Sea.
- L 1. *Pagan-Nir* general name of the Tartar King Afrangish, who invaded Persia three times, and was slain by the Persian king Kai-Khosrow (see note on L 123).
- R 143, L 49. *Sasaniand* a town of West Turkestan, once the capital of the conqueror Timur or Tamerlane.
- L 2. *Adig-bajian* a province of Persia near the Caspian Sea.
- R 144, L 30. *Sasani* a province on the Afghan frontier, on a lake of that name in which the River Helmand empties itself.
- L 30. Rastum's father, who was said to have been born with white hair, etc., and was therefore abandoned to die on Mt. Elbrus. He was there reared by a griffin, an animal with lion and eagle.
- R 145, L 100. *Kash-Kash* a town in Bokhara, famous for sheep and carpets.
- L 13. *Centar* or *Karvin*, a district south of the Caspian Sea.
- L 124. *Elburz* the mountains south of the Caspian Sea.
- Araks* *Araks* the mouths of the rivers, which, like the Oxus, empty themselves into the Aral Sea.
- L 119-20. *Bokhara* a city in Turkestan.
- L 27. *Tarimans* of the north. Turkmans from the desert south of Bokhara.
- L 22. *Tarhar* from the north of Persia west of Merv.
- Sasani* possibly the tribe known as *Sasani* south of Merv.
- L 123. *Araks* a river flowing into the Caspian Sea.
- L 128. *Farghiana* a district east of Bokhara.
- L 129. *Farghara* the Sir Darya, a Central Asian river flowing into the Caspian Sea.
- R 146, L 137. *Kopetate* the central part of the great steppe between the River Ural and the Pamir Plateau.
- L 132. *Kalman* a scattered Central Asian tribe.
- Kerakha* a Tartar tribe.
- L 133. *Kirghiz* a Tartar tribe from Pamir.
- L 134. *Ilkhan* of *Khagan* the tribes (from *il*, a tribe) from the Persian province between the Caspian Sea and Afghanistan.
- L 60. *Gabala* a city of Afghanistan.
- L 161. *Abdus* *Khosrow* the Kupan Kupan mountains.
- R 147, L 171. *Khosrow* was a Persian hero and leader; *Zairrah* was Rastum's brother.
- R 148, L 221. *Iran* Persia.

- L 223. *Kas-Khosrow* supposed to be Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, 558-528 B.C., one of the great Persian conquerors.
- L 230. *girl*. Rastum had been told that his child was a girl, and not a boy. Eventually his wife bore him a son to whom.
- R 150, L 270. *Kash* lightning.
- L 286. *Bokhara* an island on the west side of the Persian Gulf.
- R 154, L 413. *Hyphar* or *Hysar* the Sutlej and Jhelum rivers in the Punjab.
- R 155, L 452. *Star* the Dog-Star, Sirius.
- R 159, L 592. *Korda* Korda, a tribe of Central Asia to the north-west of Persia.
- R 161, L 674. *Brick* a. tattooed.
- R 162, L 679. *Griffin* see note on p. 144, L 32.
- R 164, L 700. *Sasani* see note on p. 144, L 32.
- L 72. *Zairrah* south of Lake Sistan.
- L 750-2. See previous notes on p. 144, L 404 p. 145, L 19-21.
- L 763. *Marghab* and *Tajana* rivers north-west of Afghanistan.
- L 764. *Kash* a river north of Bokhara sometimes called the *Zairrah*.
- L 765. *Sir* another name for the Jaxartes, see note on p. 145, L 29.
- R 167, L 851. *Persia* or *Persia*. Persopolis was the ancient capital of Persia, built by the semi-mythical King Jamshid; its ruins still remain.
- R 168, L 878. *Chorasmian* was the name of the district of Khiva, so named from its inhabitants, the Chorasmians.
- L 880. *Oguz* a town on the Oxus.

BALDER DEAD.

This tale is taken from Norse mythology. Balder, one of the youngest and most beautiful of the gods, was the son of Odin and Freya. On his birth his mother took an oath from all things that they would not hurt him, and in consequence when he was grown he became one of the pastimes of the gods to strike him with their swords and axes; because his steps were turned aside. But one thing—the mistletoe—she overlooked, and of that Loki, the most cunning and malicious of the Imps, took advantage which he persuaded the blind god, older to throw a stone. Thus Balder died and the poem relates the sequel.

R 168, L 1. *Paradise* was the banquet hall of the Immortals, standing among their houses in Asgard, their home, at the centre of the universe.



P. 169, L. 16. *Ymir*, the father of the gods and the eldest and greatest among them.

L. 22. *North*, the weapons of destiny, who control even the gods themselves; the names of the three chief were Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld.

P. 170, L. 47. *Sleipner* was eight-footed and swifter than any other horse in the world.

L. 50. *Valhalla*, in which Odin beholds heroes and hears all that passes in them.

L. 57. *Midgard*, the farthest built by the gods which encompasses the middle region of the earth.

L. 57. *Ida's* place was in the middle of Asgard, and here were the houses of the gods.

L. 60. *Not* whatever the number of the company of *Vo-halla*, the *halls* always supplies them with meat.

L. 68. *Valkyries*, beautiful maidens who were sent by Odin to choose the slain or the heroes who were doomed to die in battle. They served also as cupbearers at the drink.

L. 73. *Asgard*, see note on p. 165, L. 11.

P. 171, L. 85. *Frigg*, or *Frigg*, wife of Odin and Mother of the Gods.

L. 109. *Hela*, daughter of Lok, whom the gods, foreknowing that she would help to work them evil, thrust into Nifheim, the place of mist and cold, where those go who die of age or sickness or otherwise than in battle.

L. 172. *Bifrost*, the rainbow, or bridge between heaven and earth.

*Himmler*, the guardian of Bifrost against the Giants who are the enemies of the gods.

P. 173, L. 148. *Gull's* stream, the river which flows round Nifheim.

L. 153. *the northern Bear*, the constellation of the Great Bear.

L. 157. *the Day and Hunter*, the star Sirius and the constellation.

P. 174, L. 208. *Breidablik*, the house of Balder, where nothing impure may enter, the name means 'gleaming far and wide.'

P. 175, L. 221. *Hermund*, the son of Odin and the messenger of the Gods.

P. 179, L. 363. *Sinlaug*, see note on p. 165, L. 14.

P. 180, L. 375. *the ash Yggdrasil*, the tree of the universe, which had three roots, one in the north, one among the giants and one in the depths of the earth. Every day the gods hold their council upon it.

L. 378. *Glabbeinn*, one of the halls of Asgard.

P. 181, L. 423. *Vargner*, the mountain, or, alternatively, the well in the midst of Nifheim, beside the root of the ash Yggdrasil.

P. 185, L. 549, 55. Lok and Angerbode had three children, Fenir the Wolf, Jormungard the Serpent, and Hela. These the gods knew would do them harm. Hela was sent to Nifheim. Fenir they pretended to bind in sport, but actually secured him with an unbreakable chain forged by the Dwarfs, and left him on an island in Asgard. Jormungard was flung into the sea of the universe where he grew so huge that he lies encircling Midgard and biting his own tail. In the end of the universe all three will break loose and with Lok will lead the infernal hosts against the gods. They will be destroyed in the last great battle before the creation of a new order of things.

L. 561-3. After the death of Balder, Lok had a quarrel with the gods, and was compelled to fly from Asgard. He was caught at midnight in the bounds of any hallowed place, and fastened to three stones, one under his shoulder, one under his knee, and one under his foot. Over him was a poisonous serpent, the venom of which would have dropped on his face, had not Frigg his wife stood beside him to catch it in a basin. When, however, she went away to empty the basin, the poison drops on Lok, and it is his corruption which causes earthquakes.

P. 186. *the children of the gods*.

P. 191, L. 723. *Thor*, the greatest and strongest of the gods after Odin. His weapon was the hammer Mjollnir, with which in any battle he will kill the great serpent, being made invulnerable by venom. He rides in a chariot drawn by two goats; the sound of his movement is like thunder.

L. 742. *Freyr*, originally came from the Vanir. Freyr, her name. Vanadisl, another class of supernatural beings who were directed the forces of nature, but was accepted and numbered among the gods. Beyond the fact that Odr, or Od, was her husband, and a wanderer, nothing seems to be known of her.

P. 192, L. 778. *Ragnar*, or *Ragnar*, Lodbrok, son of King Sigurd, King of Denmark. He was a great hero and a valiant warrior, and was slain by the King of Northumbria. He was killed by being cast into a pit of serpents.

L. 785. *Brage*, the god of eloquence and poetry.

P. 193, L. 804. *Thora*, Ragnar's first wife, Ingeld's whom he slew. She was the daughter of the King of Gothland.

L. 811. *Asa*, or *Asa*, Ragnar's second wife, a daughter of a mortal man who lived in a house on a small farm.



P. 195, l. 87. *Ymir*, one of the giants, who lived under the ash *Iggdrasil* in *Asgard*, by which the waters of which communicated wisdom.

l. 87. *Norsemen*: see note on p. 169, l. 24. They lived by *Iggdrasil* in *Asgard*.

P. 196, ll. 91-95. The Norse myth of the creation. In the beginning was only the profound abyss of space, one side (*Nifheim*) darkness, mist, and cold; the other (*Muspelsheim*) heat and desolation. The *ice-crem* (the *ice-crem*) forth the first living being, the giant *Ymir*, and the cow *Audhumla*, who, by licking ice boulders of salt, brought forth *Buri*. *Buri's* son *Bor* was the father of *Odin*, who slew *Ymir* and all his race with the exception of *Bergelmir*, who escaped in a boat.

P. 198, l. 97. *Njord*: one of the *Vesir* (see note on p. 191, l. 742), but afterwards accepted as a god. He guides the winds and governs sea and fire. He was the father of *Freyr*.

P. 203, ll. 143-9. See note on p. 185, ll. 54-9. *Ragnar* was one of the giants.

P. 204, l. 151. *Vidar*, the strongest of the gods after *Odin* and *Thor*. In the last battle he will slay *Fenris the Wolf* after it has destroyed *Odin*. He is called 'The God of Few Words'.

*Tyr's* god of war; his right hand was bitten off by the *Wolf*.

l. 154. *golden-crowned Cock*: *Gullinkambi*, the cock of the gods, having a golden comb; in *Hela's* keeping was a similar cock, but of dun colour.

P. 205, l. 158. *a small torrent*: After the final battle a new earth and heaven will arise, from which all evil and war will have passed. *Vidar*, *Balder*, and *Hoder*, with a few other of the gods, will return there.

#### GEORGE MACDONALD.

Born 20 December 1824 at Huntly, West Aberdeenshire. He was ordained a Congregational minister in London in 1850, but resigned, retired to Manchester, and gave himself up to literature in 1853. His most famous work was his novels, both those which deal with humble Scottish life and those which are fantastic and semi-mystical. But he also wrote a good deal of verse which sometimes achieved poetry. He died at Ashford on 13 September 1905.

P. 207, l. 6. *Dunfermline*: a town in Fife near the Firth of Forth.

l. 24. *the Bass*: a rock off the east coast of Scotland, in the entrance to the Firth of Forth, used as a fortress and prison.

#### DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Born 12 May 1828 at 38 Charlotte Street, Portland Place, London, the son of an Italian political refugee. He became a leader among the group of artists who revived medieval subjects and created a new mode to express them, known as the Pre-Raphaelites; he became also one of the most markedly individual, and one of the most famous, poets of the second part of the century. In 1861 he issued a translation of *Dante's Divine Comedy* and of poems by other Italian poets of that period; in 1870 his own *Poems*, and in 1881 a volume of *Ballads and Sonnets*, from which the two following poems are taken. He died at Birchington, near Margate, on 9 April 1882.

#### THE WHITE SHIRT.

P. 212, l. 2. *Rouen*: an ancient city of France, 87 miles north-west of Paris, the capital of the old duchy of Normandy; held by the Kings of England till 1204.

P. 213, l. 45. *Harfleur*: a port of France, about six miles east of Havre.

P. 217, l. 163. *Montfort*: a port of France, seven miles from Havre.  
l. 166. *the Body of Christ*: the Host in a procession of the Blessed Sacrament.

#### THE KING'S TRAGEDY.

P. 222, *John*: James I. of Scotland (1394-1437) was kept a prisoner in England from about 1406 to 1424, during which period he saw, loved, and praised in his poem *The King's Quest*, the Lady Jane Beaufort. He married her in 1423. On his return to reign in Scotland he developed a policy of attack on the great nobles and of advancement of the royal authority. This policy led to his murder.

P. 223, l. 26. *de Bass Rock*: see note on p. 208, l. 24.

l. 28. *Henry*: Henry IV of England.

l. 48. *Scots*: in Perthshire, where the kings of the Scots were crowned.

P. 224, l. 72. *Roche of Roxburgh*, a fortress in north-east Scotland, then in the possession of the English.

P. 225, l. 103. *Sir Robert Graham*: In pursuance of his policy of suppressing the great nobles, the king had seized the earldom of Strathern, the rightful holder of which was the nephew of Graham.

P. 226, l. 141. *Perth*: 48 miles north-east of Edinburgh. James had founded the Cistercian monastery there.



P. 228, l. 1768 *the Duncraig and the Dhee* the two streams which when they meet make the North river.

l. 179.  *Inchkeith Isle*: a small fortified island in the Firth of Forth.

l. 183. *Links of Forth*: The Forth is a river running into an inlet of south-eastern Scotland. Links are level sandy ground near the sea.

P. 230, l. 160. *Earl of Atholl*: as Atholl; Walter, Earl of Atholl, was of the king's house and had some claim to the crown.

l. 262. *Roderic*: Roderic, grandson to the Earl of Atholl.

l. 314. *Christopher Chamberlain* or *Chamberlain* (Lang, *History of Scotland*).

P. 235, l. 414. *Fuile-cup*: a cup of spiced wine taken before retiring to rest.

P. 235, l. 469. *Aberdeen*: Aberdeen, 130 miles north of Edinburgh, the fourth largest city of Scotland.

### CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI

Born at 38 Charlotte Street, Portland Place, on 3 December 1830, the younger sister of D. G. Rossetti. She is the third name among English poets, ranking after (but only after) Elizabeth Browning and Alice Meynell. Her life was absorbed into her religion, and her poetry was the expression of it. 'Goblin Market' (1862) is the best of her very few narrative poems, and is surpassed by any of her more subjective. She died of cancer in Dorington Square, London, on 29 December 1894.

### SEBASTIAN EVANS

Born 30 March 1830, at Market Bosworth, Leicestershire. He took a great interest in many forms of art, spent ten years in managing the art department of a glass works, and practised wood-carving, painting, engraving, book-binding, and writing in prose and verse. He assisted in the revival of medieval studies and translated (under the title of *The Holy History of the Holy Grail*) the old French romance of Percival le Gallois. He died at Abbot's Barton, Canterbury, on 19 December 1903. The poem which follows is from *Brother Fabian's Manuscript* (1865).

P. 206. *De Sancti Brendani Filiu Fidele*: Of (or about) Saint Brendan (484-577) the son of Finlagga so called to distinguish him from another Brendan of the same period. He was abbot of a monastery at Clonsilla in eastern Galway. The story of his voyage was among the most famous of medieval tales and has also been put into verse by Matthew Arnold.

l. 213. *Qui descendunt*: See Psalm cxxi, 23, 24. They that go down to the sea in ships . . . see the works of the Lord.

l. 17, 18. *Enoch* . . . *Eliakim*: See Genesis v. 24 and 2 Kings ii. 11. These two are the only living beings who passed into Paradise without dying.

P. 269, l. 32. *Domine dirige*: 'O Lord, direct [us].'

P. 270, l. 86. *Jarnungar*: Cf. Jormungand in the Norse mythology (note on p. 185, l. 349-58).

l. 75. *claud*: farm.

l. 84. *emphases*: the last service of the day.

P. 271, l. 171. *Herit*: Here becometh [the tale] of Judas Iscariot.

P. 274. *Engelst*, etc.: Here becometh [the tale] of Judas Iscariot.

l. 221. *Moyse*: Moses. The reference is to Genesis. The writing of Genesis, and the following four books, was ascribed to Moses.

P. 275, l. 217. *Utin*, etc.: that we may bless the Lord in eternal joy.

### WILLIAM MORRIS

Born in Walthamstow, London, on 24 March 1834. At Oxford he formed a friendship with the painter Edward Burne-Jones, and these two did much to create the movement which succeeded to the Pre-Raphaelites. His interest in all forms of art led to the formation in 1861 of a business firm in which he was the chief partner and which took for scope all kinds of furnishing and decoration, ecclesiastical and civil. Besides these he was personally occupied with poetry, prose, and social and industrial reform. In 1890 he established the Kelmscott Press, for which he designed three fonts of type. He died at Hamsey Heath on 3 October 1896. Less given than some of his contemporaries, he was far wider in interest: and aesthetic deprivation of life—whether by poems or wallpapers—was in his eyes a thing as needless as water and as necessary as food.

### QUERQUY TOWN NOIR

P. 276, l. 2. *the Quercy of Chiny*: Jean Froissart (1334-1405), the great French chronicler. Chiny is a town now in the province of Hainault, Belgium. Froissart was made a canon c. 1374, and is said to be buried in the church of St. Marguerite there.

l. 51. *Gascon*: native of Gascony, a district of south-western France. Its inhabitants gained a reputation for boasting, but of things done and not pretended.

l. 17. *Pentade*: a viscounty of central France and its chief town.

l. 18. *Avouerie*: a south-central province of France.



P. 277, l. 33. *villagers*: a class of serfs, especially a peasant occupier subject to a lord.

L. 47. *Clarcasonnes*: a city in South-western France, on the river Aude.

L. 52. *the horse in Job*: Job xxix, 19-25.

P. 279, l. 99. *Jaquerie*: the rising of the peasants in France in 1357-8; from Jacques Bonhomme, the slang French name for a peasant.

L. 101. *Evassant*: an ancient and famous day north-west of Paris, near which the *Jaquerie* broke out.

P. 281, ll. 145. *for gentle*. . . *By a chain of flowers*: an allusion to certain customs in the days of tournaments and courtly love, when the knight was treated to the service of his lady.

P. 282, l. 190. *Jean Froissart*: see note on p. 276, l. 1.

P. 283, l. 191. *the Eure*: a river of Northern France.

#### THE SON OF CROESUS.

P. 283, l. 1. *Croesus*: c. 560 B.C. He was reputed to be the richest of mankind, but was defeated by Cyrus, King of Persia, and his capital burnt. *Lydia*, originally a kingdom in Asia Minor, became thereafter a province of Persia.

P. 286, l. 93. *Phrygia*: a country of Asia Minor, west of Lydia.

L. 94. *Gordius*, the son of Midas: Midas seems to have reversed the classical relationship, in which Gordius, a Phrygian peasant who was raised to the throne, was the father of Midas.

P. 287, l. 141. *Calycdon*: a district of Greece, ravaged by a wild boar sent by Artemis because her deity had been neglected. It was slain in an expedition of the heroes.

P. 288, l. 159. *Hercules*: one of the mythical Greek heroes, and the strongest of men. He killed many fierce beasts; it is uncertain which particular exploit is alluded to in the text.

L. 172. *Calisto*: a Greek hero, who destroyed a dragon.

L. 173. *the bull of Marathon*: slain by Theseus, a hero and King of Athens.

L. 174. *Admetus*: a maiden who took part in the hunting of the Calycdonian boar, who was the first to wound.

P. 295, l. 101. *Sardis*: the capital of Lydia.

P. 298, l. 101. *Pallad*: the goddess of wisdom.

#### ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

Born in Chester Street, Grosvenor Place, London, on 5 April 1837. Of his genius and place opinion remains uncertain. He was friendly with the Pre-Raphaelites, but his own work is indistinguishable from theirs, not

only by its style, but by its "continuous" preoccupation with philosophy. His fluency, not only in numbers but in length of poems, prevented him from expressing, and prevents his readers from appreciating, the value of his ideas. He died on 10 April 1902.

P. 299, title *Leul*. The incident dealt with in the extract comes from the story of *Leul*, a princess of Ireland, whom Tristan brought to Cornwall to marry King Mark. On the voyage they drank of a love-potion and loved each other. In the end Tristan died in Brittany through the anger of another *Leul*, and the queen, arriving too late to save him, died also. Palomides, one of the great Arthurian figures who awaits his due revenge, was an unbaptized knight from the East, who endured a hopeless passion for *Leul*.

#### ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Born at 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh, on 13 November 1850. After attending classes at Edinburgh University he was called to the Bar in 1875. In the winter of 1874-5 he made the acquaintance of W. E. Henley, and in 1878 of George Meredith; in 1876 he began to contribute to the *Glasgow Magazine*. His health was always bad, and after attempts to improve it by various journeys and visits in Europe and America he went in 1890 to Samoa and settled there for the rest of his life. His reputation among the general public was gained by *Treasure Island* (1882) and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). He died on 3 December 1894.



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